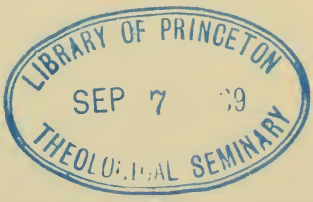
WHAT MUST THE CHURCH DO TO BE SAVED?

ERNEST FREMONT TITTLE



BR 125 .T4
Tittle, Ernest Fremont, 1885
-1949.
What must the church do to
be saved?

LIBRARY OF PRINCETON
SEP 7 1939
THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

The Mendenhall Lectures, Sixth Series
Delivered at DePauw University

What Must the Church Do to Be Saved?

And Other Discussions

BY
ERNEST FREMONT TITTLE

THE ABINGDON PRESS
NEW YORK CINCINNATI

Copyright, 1921, by
ERNEST FREMONT TITTLE

Printed in the United States of America

First Edition Printed April, 1921
Reprinted September, 1921

TO

G. M. T.

CONTENTS

CHAPTER		PAGE
	FOREWORD	7
I.	WHAT MUST THE CHURCH DO TO BE SAVED?	11
II.	THE CHANGING CONCEPTION OF GOD	38
III.	SIN	63
IV.	SALVATION	83
V.	JESUS CHRIST THE HOPE OF THE WORLD	107
VI.	CHRISTIANITY AND LIFE	137

FOREWORD

From the title to the last paragraph this little book is a challenge. It stimulates honest thinking upon the great facts of the Christian faith. In spirit and in method it admirably illustrates the dictum of John Wesley, "Think and let think." The pain and peril of our time is not that great masses of people think and feel differently from the orthodox few, but because they do not really think and feel at all. Some of the writer's statements will disturb hereditary religious notions. But there is on every page a ringing appeal for reality in faith, for intellectual honesty, and for the exaltation of "the Strong Son of God" in every kingdom of the world. The author faces fearlessly the doubts of this chaotic time. He so interprets the basal teachings of Christianity that they become the more human in their appeal and divine in their compulsion.

Multitudes of the plain people count themselves outside the evangelical church because they no longer hear in their own tongue a sure word of life. In these lectures Doctor Tittle

has restated in the language of present life some of the great truths of religious belief. To present the unchanging religion of Jesus Christ in the ever-changing forms of human thinking is a splendid service.

The Mendenhall Lectures of De Pauw University, to which this series of addresses belongs, was founded by the Rev. Marmaduke H. Mendenhall, D.D., of the North Indiana Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church. The object of the donor was "to found a perpetual lectureship on the evidences of the divine origin of Christianity and the inspiration and authority of the Holy Scriptures. The lecturers must be persons of high and wide repute, of broad and varied scholarship, who firmly adhere to the evangelical system of Christian faith. The selection of lecturers may be made from the world of Christian scholarship, without regard to denominational divisions. Each course of lectures is to be published in book form by an eminent publishing house and sold at cost to the Faculty and students of the University."

Lectures previously published:

1913, The Bible and Life, Edwin Holt Hughes.

1914, The Literary Primacy of the Bible, George Peck Eckman.

1917, Understanding the Scriptures, Francis John McConnell.

1918, Religion and War, William Herbert Perry Faunce.

1919, Some Aspects of International Christianity, John Kelman.

George R. Grose,
President De Pauw University.

CHAPTER I

WHAT MUST THE CHURCH DO TO BE SAVED?

The question with which this chapter is concerned is not, What must the church do to live? The church is not going to die. It has too much momentum behind it to come to a dead stop. It is too firmly supported by the affections and investments of millions of people to fall. But it would be possible for the church to remain alive yet not powerfully alive. It would be possible for the church to keep on talking without saying anything that greatly needs to be said, and to keep on turning the wheels of its machinery without bringing any needed thing to pass. And, surely, it must be a matter of grave concern to ecclesiastical leaders that the common people who heard Jesus gladly are not darkening the door of the modern church. Indeed, church attendance upon the part of all classes is undeniably on the decline, and the question with which we are now concerned is, What must the church do to be saved from inefficiency, none the less tragic because it is solemn and

stately, and to play her rightful part in the reshaping of the world? This is a big question, and the author of these pages is under no illusion as to his own ability to answer it fully; but he ventures to give frank expression to his deepest convictions in the hope that at least some true and helpful word may be said.

I

If the church is to play any large and vital part in the building of a better civilization, she must clothe her message in the living language of the present time and no longer conceal it in the antiquated garb of a former day. There is value, no doubt, in historic continuity, but only in a continuity of the Christian spirit and the Christian purpose, not, surely, in any merely mechanical continuity of terminology. What really matters is not that we should say what prophets said, but that we should see as prophets saw. What is vitally important is not that we should employ the phraseology which saints and martyrs used, but that we too should dare to climb the steep ascent to heaven through peril, toil, and pain. As a matter of fact, a petrified religious vocabulary may stand in the way of a genuine religious passion. The continuity of

the Christian purpose may actually be hindered by the artificial dam of a meaningless terminology. Unless one can stir the hearts of men his preaching is in vain. How can one hope to stir the hearts of men with a vocabulary which to contemporaneous ears sounds fanciful and strange?

Does not the vocabulary of modern psychology provide a far surer instrument for reaching the deep springs of human emotion than does the now almost alien language of mediæval theology? Talk to the first man you meet about original sin, and he will listen to you unmoved. But talk to him about the solidarity of evil—the transmission of evil impulses through biological channels and social institutions—and he will at least give you interested attention. Talk to this same chance acquaintance about imputed guilt or imputed righteousness, and he will feel at once the clammy touch of unreality. But call his attention to the responsibility of every citizen for the moral conditions which prevail in his city, and he will begin to suspect that religion has something to do with life. So also the word "grace" is to many people meaningless. But if, instead of talking about "grace," one were to speak of the power which enters men's lives whenever contact is established with any

great life-giving personality, human or divine, would he not secure an intelligent and sympathetic response?

There are a few people still in all the churches in whose minds religious passion is ever inseparable from a certain stereotyped religious vocabulary; and when they fail to hear the ancient phrases they suspect the absence of the ancient passion. But over against these relatively few persons within the church there is the great multitude outside the church whom the Christian pulpit will be powerless to reach if it insists upon employing a religious vocabulary which none save the most carefully instructed person is able to understand.

II

Nor is it merely the language of religion that must be kept alive. The thought forms of religion, its doctrines, its so-called articles, must be kept alive if the church is to function in any great and helpful way. In the famous essay on "The Will to Believe," Professor James contends that we have a right to believe, at our own risk, any hypothesis that is alive enough to tempt the will. The church has not only an incontestable right but a solemn duty to ask men to believe in something.

It is only as men begin enthusiastically to believe in something that any advance in civilization can be made. But the church must see to it that what she does ask men to believe in is something that is alive enough to tempt their wills and to capture their allegiance. The church cannot hope to command the respect and devotion of forward-looking men if she insists upon clinging to dogmas which the world's best intelligence has repudiated, and the world's best conscience has come to deplore. The time has passed when the church might identify truth with tradition and say to men, "As the fathers believed so must their sons believe throughout all generations."

One might call attention to the futility of this attempt. Can the church keep men from entering into the intellectual heritage of the ages, or even into the intellectual discoveries of their own age? It can for a time. The ignorant peasantry of southern Italy, the oppressed and degraded peons of Mexico, are, no doubt, sufficient evidence of the power of the church to keep men uninformed for a time—but not for all time. Not long ago, a friend of the author's, while in the extreme southern part of Mexico, found a Russian Jew preaching the gospel of bolshevism to half-

naked Indians under the very roof of a Roman Catholic church. Can the church keep men permanently from thinking new thoughts and cherishing new ambitions? As well ask, Can the church keep to-morrow's sun from rising, slowly at first, so that only the most distant horizon reveals the gray-clad outposts of the coming dawn, but steadily and resistlessly advancing until the glory of a new day has captured the world?

But perhaps it were even better to call attention to the essential faithlessness of this insistence upon a stereotyped creed, an unchanging theology. I once heard a description of faith which I shall never forget as long as faith remains for me the great life principle, the beating heart of all progress. "We are standing," said the speaker, "in a little circle of light. All about us is darkness. Faith is the courage with which one steps out into that darkness, not knowing what he will find there, but trusting that the God of the light is the God also of the darkness, and that in the end all will be found to be true and right."[1] A few illustrations will suffice to make clear his meaning. Here is Abraham.

[1] Kirsopp Lake, professor of Early Christian Literature in Harvard University. I am obliged to rely upon my memory for this quotation, and I may not have reproduced the lecturer's exact words, but I feel sure that I have stated his exact meaning.

He stands in a little circle of light—Ur of the Chaldees. Round about him is darkness. Faith in him is the courage with which he steps out into that darkness, not knowing what he will find there, but trusting that in the end all will be well. Here also is Christopher Columbus. He too stands in a little circle of light—the limited geographical knowledge and cosmological science of his day. Round about him is the vast darkness of an untraveled ocean. Faith in him is the courage with which he pushes out into that darkness, crying, "Sail on! Sail on! Sail on!" And here, once more, are weary, impoverished, war-torn nations. They likewise are standing in a little circle of light—the experience of the race until now, crowded with wars and rumors of war and all the horrible consequences of strife. About them, surely, is the thick darkness of a great uncertainty. But what if they had the courage to move out into that darkness along the lines of international justice and good will? What if they had the courage to form a real league of nations, aiming to secure justice, and to maintain the peace of the world? It might be that by faith they would achieve that better civilization for which in our time millions of men have fought and died.

But now consider: if faith be the courage with which men step out into the darkness of the unknown, trusting that the God of the known is the God also of the unknown, and that in the end all will be found to be true and right—if this be faith, it follows that among the men who lack faith is the dogmatist. For the dogmatist is a man who stands in his little circle of light and remains standing there, *afraid to budge!* How often has the church applied the word "skeptic" to the wrong man! Copernicus, Galileo, Darwin, Tolstoy —these men, one after another, the church has branded as skeptics. But judged by the description which we now have before us every one of these men possessed a vast deal of faith. Who is the real skeptic? Never the adventurer. The real skeptic is the dogmatist —the man who is afraid to venture, to experiment, to become a pioneer in the spiritual world. The real skeptic is never the man who is honestly and courageously seeking the truth if haply he may find it, but, rather, the man who dogmatically asserts that he has the truth, and that no further investigation is needed. Consider, then, the essential faithlessness of a closed theological system, and of men who stand in their little circles of light refusing to move out, and on.

Consider this also—the relationship between ecclesiastical dogmatism and political autocracy. They are twin sisters, and are found always together. Democracy calls for the scientific method, the method of investigation and experiment, for democracy desires ever to create something new and something better. But autocracy calls for the dogmatic method of authoritative assertion; for autocracy is interested only in the upholding of the existing order, and this can be done never by granting the right of free inquiry and experimentation, but only by insisting upon orthodoxy, an unquestioning acceptance of received traditions. Thus democracy calls for the prophet and autocracy calls for the priest. Nicholas II needed a Pobedonoscev. And in every nation where autocracy has flourished for a time, an autocratic government has been supported by a dogmatic church. It is one of the most pitiful and damnable scandals of history that churches claiming to be Christian have in instance after instance exerted the whole weight of their influence in behalf of political despotism and reaction.

December 14 of the year 1825 witnessed the first great attempt to secure some form of representative government in Russia.[1] The

[1] See Masaryk's, The Spirit of Russia, vol i, p. 95ff.

revolution was headed by members of the Russian aristocracy, including many of the most brilliant and promising intellectuals. The aims of the revolutionists, judged by certain present-day demands, were mild enough. In addition to some form of constitutional government, they were seeking certain military reforms, such as the reduction of the period of military service, then twenty-five years, and the mitigation, not abolition, of corporal punishment. But the revolt was unsuccessful, and more than a thousand of its leaders were arrested. Of these, one hundred and twenty-one were pronounced guilty, and were sentenced, five to be quartered, thirty-one to be guillotined, the rest to be exiled to Siberia. It is only just to add that in respect of the five chief offenders the Tsar finally relented, and instead of having them quartered he "merely had them hanged." And then, if any enlightened Russian ventured to give utterance to liberal ideas, the Tsar had him officially pronounced insane! This frightfully reactionary policy of the Russian government was supported throughout by the Russian Church. The Tsar's minister of education declared, "It is our joint task to secure that the culture of the nation shall be carried on in the unified

spirit of orthodoxy, autocracy, and patriotism." The church declared, "God himself commands us to obey the Tsar's authority, not from fear alone, but as a point of conscience." And to the young recruits who were doomed to serve for twenty-five years in the Russian army, the church said, "God wills that you should serve him and the great Tsar as soldiers; before you were born it was God's determination that you should become warriors."

"The mills of God grind slowly, yet they grind exceeding small." And the awful fate which has overtaken the church in Russia awaits the church in any nation where political or industrial autocracy is supported by ecclesiastical dogmatism. It is important that the church should modernize its dogma and make it a fit temple for the modern mind. But it is of even greater importance that the church should surrender forever the dogmatic spirit. An intellectually indefensible dogma is bad; but what is utterly and ruinously bad is that spirit of dogmatism which opposes all progress, whether in the church or in the state, and becomes a source not of life but of death.

The real danger to religion lies not in change but, rather, in stagnation. Change

may mean growth, more life; stagnation always means death. The real danger to religion lies not in the intellectual progressiveness, the spiritual radicalism, of a Jesus, but in the selfish worldliness of a Caiaphas. The church may be misled for a time by intellectual pioneers who miss the way; she is certain to be morally and spiritually suffocated by untransformed worldlings who give lip allegiance to her creed, but no allegiance to her Founder.

III

If the church is to make any vital contribution toward a better civilization, it must become a thoroughly unselfish organization.

One of the best and ablest of the younger clergy of the Church of England has complained that the Anglican Church is seldom deeply moved; that only one subject moves it to heroic exertion and to displays of genuine and undoubted zeal; that, unfortunately, that one subject is the question of its own establishment and endowments. Just how far this criticism really applies to the Church of England I am not prepared to say. Nor am I prepared to say just how far it applies in spirit to the Non-Conformist bodies either of England or of America. I refer to it be-

cause it calls attention to one of the subtlest and most dangerous temptations to which the church is exposed, namely, the temptation to think of itself as an end in itself and not as a means to an end. The great end that is set before the church is the development, the enrichment, the Christianization of human life. But this great end is frequently lost sight of by people who compose the church. They think of the work of the church, not in terms of human values, but in terms of ecclesiastical values. The first question that leaps into their minds when any new plan is proposed is not, How will this affect the lives of men? but, How will this affect the life of the church? How will it affect attendance upon the evening service or the morning service? How will it affect the treasury of the church? If people are urged to give to some new project, will they not have less to give to the church?

Such questions as these are not born of conscious, deliberate selfishness. They are frequently framed by people concerning whom many a beautiful act bears witness that in their personal lives they are splendidly unselfish. The psychology of the situation is somewhat like this: People believe in the church. They have reason to believe in it. It has meant much to them. If it does not

mean much to the multitude outside, it is plainly the fault of those who will not come in, not the fault of those who are in. If certain obdurate persons elect to remain outside the church, so much the worse for them. Those who have found in the services of the sanctuary the spiritual nourishment which their souls require will see to it that nothing is permitted to jeopardize the interests of an institution that has meant so much to them, and which could mean much to many who blindly pass it by. They do not realize, these churchgoing people, that they are seeking first, not the salvation of the community, but the salvation of the church. Unconsciously, they are demanding of the community that it shall feed the church, not of the church that it shall feed the community.

But the great law enunciated by Jesus applies not only to individuals. It applies to such collectivities as the church. "Whosoever would save his life shall lose it; and whosoever shall lose his life for my sake shall find it." The only way in which the church can hope to save its life is by daring to lose it —by daring to lose sight of it. The church must stop thinking about itself and begin to think about the community. It must stop asking, "How can this community be induced to

attend the services of this church?" and begin to ask, "How can this church be induced to render service to this community?" Let no one depreciate the so-called services of the church. "Man cannot live by bread alone." He requires faith, hope, love, good cheer, inspiration. Services in which the souls of men are fed are never held in vain. Such services render service of inestimable value. But a church whose chief concern is to keep its own machinery going is not apt to hold a service in which anybody's soul will be fed. The only church whose services will render service is the church that has dared to lay aside its outer garments, and take a towel, and gird itself, and pour water into a basin, and begin to wash the community's weary, dust-laden feet. When the church starts out to render service, and not merely to increase attendance upon its services, its services will take on such a jubilant, inspirational character that attendance upon them will increase by leaps and bounds. When the church stops thinking about itself and begins to think about the community, the community will begin to think about the church. Any church that dares to lose its life for Christ's sake, that is to say, for the community's sake, will gloriously find it. And no one will question its right to live.

IV

Democracy was born of Christianity. It was born in the soul of Jesus who had such a mighty faith in the common man; who saw in every man, born of woman, all the potential power and glory of a son of God. And the church which bears the name of Jesus has played no small part in getting democracy established in the life of the world. Its condition of membership has been, now a sacrament, now a creed; here baptism, there confession. But whatever the condition, it has never made any distinction between rich and poor, the high-placed and the low-placed, the ruler and the ruled. All who were willing to be baptized might come. All who were ready to join in the great confession might come. And slaves came. The first Christian congregations were made up largely of men who were owned by other men. Later, soldiers came; soldiers of the greatest and proudest empire of ancient times. Finally came men of light and leading, men of wealth and influence. To-day, the doors of the church are open wide to men of all races and nations, all classes and parties, all languages and colors. By its condition of membership, down through the centuries, the church has borne

witness to the democracy that leaped into being in the soul of Jesus. It has proclaimed in trumpet tones, "One is your Father; all ye are brethren."

But what the world now needs is not merely a witness to democracy, but an embodiment of democracy. And lonely, heart-hungry people, or cynical, skeptical people, who are looking for an embodiment of democracy, do not always find it in the Christian Church. The democracy of the Roman Catholic Church is more apparent than real. Rich and poor kneel at the same altar; but once they have left the great cathedral they are apt to become strangers. And if in the Roman Catholic Church democracy is more apparent than real, in many Protestant churches it is not even apparent. A fellow minister once told me that some of the women of his congregation were accustomed to make church calls. I asked for enlightenment, and discovered that a "church call" is a purely perfunctory visit which Mrs. Dives pays to Mrs. Lazarus, and which Mrs. Lazarus, though she belongs to the same congregation, is expected under no circumstances to return. I myself once heard an elect lady declare concerning another woman of the same church that her interest in this humbler sister was spiritual rather than so-

cial. People whose interest in other people is spiritual rather than social, ecclesiastical rather than human, make it impossible for the church to embody the democracy to which it has so splendidly borne witness. The man on the street who passes, but never enters, the door of the church says in his haste that church people are hypocrites; and church people do not feel kindly toward the man on the street because he says this. But when the careful observer sees within the church the same class consciousness, the same foolish pride and snobbery, that he sees outside the church, he can at least understand the somewhat harsh and hasty judgment of the man of the street.

Said Jesus, "A new commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another." He said it to people who were in the church, not to people who were outside the church. He added, "By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another." Would anything be so likely to convince a skeptical world of the integrity of the church as a demonstration of the democracy which the church professes? With magnificent rhetoric the church has proclaimed the Fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man. But, unfortunately, she has tolerated

class distinctions and class pride within her own organization; and a skeptical world has looked on, sometimes with anger, sometimes with amusement, always with contempt. What if the church should begin not only to preach brotherhood but to practice it? What if the most brotherly organization in town were not the Knights of Pythias, or the Elks' Club, or Mike Fogarty's saloon, but the Christian Church? What if the Christian Church should become a place where Tom, Dick, and Harry, together with their wives and children, could meet, not on the basis of an impossible equality which never has existed, and never will exist, but on the basis of a mutual sympathy and good will which has not always existed, but might exist? In the presence of a church that merely preaches brotherhood the world will remain cynical till the crack of doom. But in the presence of a church that dared to practice brotherhood the last vestige of the world's cynicism would be blown away, and the kingdom of God would come with power in that community.

V

Through centuries past the church has devoted her time and resources to the saving of individuals. And what a magnificent work

she has done! She has found men drunk and left them sober. She has found men polluted and left them clean. She has found them despairing and left them hoping. And in generation after generation she has produced individual men and women who loyally restrained every lawless inclination, and loved the Lord their God with all their strength, and their neighbors as themselves, and so became as the salt of the earth and saved their communities from utter rottenness. If anyone is tempted to depreciate this service which the church has historically rendered, let him consider what sort of world we would be living in to-day if service such as this had not been given us. Let him also consider how long it will be before we get any better social order if the church does not continue to develop in individuals that mind which was also in Christ Jesus.

But to-day, the church must have faith not only in the improvableness of men, but in the improvableness of man, of human nature, and so, eventually, of human society. The question as to the usefulness of the church to the modern world will, I think, be determined, in no small degree, by the answer which the church returns to such questions as these: What of prostitution? What of industrial

strife and injustice? What of war? Lust, greed, pugnacity—these certainly are powerful instincts, and universally distributed. But, recognizing both their universality and their power, has the church faith enough in God and in man to say that lust may be transmuted into love, greed into altruism, and that pugnacity, far from remaining a force that is wholly destructive, may be transformed into a force that is splendidly constructive? What will the church say to the cynicism which is now so noisily present in certain quarters? To men affirming that human nature being what it is, prostitution is inevitable, what will the church say? And when men argue that human nature being what it is war is inevitable, what will the church reply? If the church should lose, or, perhaps one should say, fail to achieve, the faith of Jesus in the possibility of a better civilization, then I believe she would seriously jeopardize her future. For, whatever may be true of cynical, unbelieving individuals, in the heart of mankind are quenchless longings and passionate hopes; and a struggling, discontented, aspiring humanity will not continue forever to support any institution which mocks and denies its highest hopes. If the church should not believe it possible, then the suffering masses

of men will turn to some other organization which does believe it possible for prostitution, industrial strife, and injustice, even war, to be done away.

VI

In the days to come anything like a narrow, bitter, bigoted denominationalism will be hopelessly out of place. The Great War has not made the world safe for democracy. In fact, it has in many places accentuated the very evils which it was intended to destroy. But this one good thing it has done: it has blown down some of the high walls of religious prejudice.

One thinks of the ancient enmity between Jews and Gentiles, when the Mishna forbade aid to be given to a Gentile woman in her hour of need, and even forbade nourishment to be given to her babe. Then he thinks of the splendid service rendered by Jewish people in Belgian relief work. One thinks of Shakespeare's Shylock, his contempt for Christians, and their contempt for him. Then he thinks of that Jewish rabbi on the western front. A Catholic boy lay wounded and dying. There was no Catholic chaplain near. So the Jewish rabbi stooped down and picked up a twig, bent it in the form of a cross, and held the cross

before the glazed eyes of the Catholic soldier until he died. One thinks of the so-called religious wars that decimated Europe, when Catholics burned Protestants and Protestants hanged Catholics. Then he thinks of Roman Catholic boys writing to their folks, in Young Men's Christian Association huts, on stationery furnished by Protestant people; and of Protestant boys writing to their folks, in Knights of Columbus huts, on stationery furnished by Roman Catholic people.

I myself have witnessed incidents that five years ago would have been deemed incredible. I have seen a Methodist preacher act as an usher at a Roman Catholic mass. The mass was held in a Young Men's Christian Association hut, where the preacher was serving as a secretary. The Catholic boys came streaming into the hut in such numbers that they were unable to find seats; so the preacher-secretary promptly assumed the role of usher. I can vouch for the truth of this story, for I was the preacher. I can also vouch for the fact that Father O'Connor promptly reciprocated by making a substantial contribution from his own pocket to the work being done by the Protestant Young Men's Christian Association. I told this story in Urbana, Ohio, where he had been a priest; he told it in Co-

lumbus, Ohio, where I had been a pastor. As a result, Methodists in Urbana made pleasant remarks concerning Roman Catholics, and Roman Catholics in Columbus made pleasant remarks concerning Methodists; and the Master's prayer, "That they may all be one, even as we are one," came a little nearer to realization.

Just before I left Camp Sheridan, I was invited by the Jewish rabbi of Montgomery to speak in the synagogue on the work being done by the Young Men's Christian Association. I eagerly accepted the invitation. At the close of the service a father of Israel walked slowly toward the pulpit. His hair was long and white, his countenance typically Hebrew. His eyes were full of tears, and grasping both my hands in his he said, "Young man, I want you to know that I am nearer to being a Jewish Christian to-day than I have ever been before." Deeply moved, restraining with difficulty the tears that would have come to my own eyes, I replied, "If you, sir, are nearer to being a Jewish Christian, I suspect I am nearer to being a Christian Jew."

In France, in the last camp where I was privileged to serve, a Roman Catholic lad assisted me by handing cookies over the coun-

ter; and a Jewish lad, by washing the cups from which his Protestant comrades had drunk their chocolate.

In our day millions of men have trained and fought and suffered with men who pronounced different denominational shibboleths and professed different creeds. These men have learned to look upon one another with a new understanding and a new respect. They have discovered that the religious beliefs which unite men are far more significant and far more necessary than are the religious beliefs which separate men. For instance, what really matters under shell-fire is not whether one has been baptized by sprinkling or by immersion, but whether one believes that at the heart of things there is decency and justice, and that if one gives his life for some good cause he will not have died in vain.

To-day, who can fail to see that religious pride and bigotry have become unseemly, a sort of inexcusable effrontery of which all right-thinking people must feel ashamed? Just before David Livingstone laid down his life in Africa, he sent that now famous message to the outside world: "All I can say in my loneliness is, May God's richest blessing come down upon any man, American, English, Turk, who will help to heal this open sore of

the world." When one thinks of the hell of slaughter through which we have passed—the smoking guns, the burning villages, the blinded eyes, the broken bodies, the decaying corpses; when he thinks of the white, drawn faces of suffering women, and of the white, thin faces of frightened, undernourished children, ought he not say, "May God's richest blessing come down upon any man—Methodist, Baptist, Lutheran, Anglican, Protestant, Catholic, Gentile, Jew—who will help to heal the awful wounds of a war-shattered world?

The tragedy of a bickering and often puerile denominationalism lies not only in the fact that it separates men who ought to be united. The regrettable situation thus precipitated is in process of correction not merely in consequence of the better understanding and mutual respect noted above, but, also, in consequence of certain economic factors of which even the most bigoted of churchmen must take account. A day is almost certainly coming when denominational differences which involve no real difference in human life will be held not to justify the financial support of a separate institution. Even now any overlapping on the part of competing denominations is looked upon with very apparent disapproval by a heavily taxed public. But the

tragedy of denominationalism lies also in this further fact, that a disunited Christendom is unable to speak with a united voice even when, as in August, 1914, the fate of a world hangs in the balance. One needs only to consider what might have happened had Christendom been in a position to speak with a clear and united voice when Austria issued her ultimatum to Serbia to realize how truly deplorable is our present situation. Let it be freely conceded that some measure of difference, both mental and temperamental, will always be found among Christian people. Still, may not one venture to believe that when it comes to an issue such as confronted the world when the governing classes of Europe let loose the dogs of war, the followers of Jesus ought to be able to speak with a single voice? If they were able to speak with a *single* voice in relation to any great issue involving the welfare of mankind, the world might consent to listen to them. It might even be compelled to listen to them.

CHAPTER II

THE CHANGING CONCEPTION OF GOD

Change, very often, is just another name for growth. "When I was a child," said Saint Paul, "I spake as a child, I felt as a child, I thought as a child: now that I am become a man, I have put away childish things."[1] And what is true of the individual is true likewise of the race. The race outgrows and ought to outgrow its childish notions.

Men once believed that the earth was flat, and that if some Ulysses, becoming too bold, should sail beyond the sunset, he would drop off into a fathomless abyss. And this childish notion of the conformation of the earth had to be outgrown before the American continent could be discovered.

Men once believed that disease was caused by evil spirits, and that the only method of cure was exorcism. This childish notion of disease had to be outgrown before any of the triumphs of modern medicine, modern sur-

[1] 1 Cor. 13. 11.

gery, or modern sanitation could become possible.

Men once believed that kings ruled by divine right; that the voice of the king was the will of God, and that the person of the king was sacred. This childish notion of kingship had to be outgrown before democracy could get a start on the Atlantic seaboard, and spread from coast to coast and from shore to shore.

Men once thought of God in terms of nearby institutions that were harsh and cruel. How significant that story of Abraham going forth, in obedience to what he conceives to be the will of God, to slay with his own hand the late-born son in whom he has centered all his hopes. The God in whom Jacob believes is a God with whom one may drive a hard bargain. The penniless wanderer registers a vow that if Yahweh will give him food to eat and raiment to wear and Oriental wealth in flocks and herds, he, for his part, will give back to Yahweh a tenth of all he shall come to possess. How significant, also, this naïve business transaction in which the Deity is offered a handsome commission for his pains. The God in whom the author of the 137th psalm believes is a God to whom one may address such a petition as this:

Remember, O Lord, against the children of Edom
The day of Jerusalem;
Who said, Raze it, raze it,
Even to the foundation thereof.
O daughter of Babylon, that art to be destroyed,
Happy shall he be, that rewardeth thee
As thou hast served us;
Happy shall he be, that taketh and dasheth thy little ones
Against the rock.

These, surely, are childish notions of God, and must be outgrown before men can see God in the face of Jesus Christ.

How important it is that we should get a true conception of God. Like God, like men. The conception which we have of God will influence every personal aspiration and every far-reaching social enterprise.

In Ireland, during the first half of the nineteenth century, English landlords discovered that land planted with potatoes would feed three times as many people as would the same land if sown with wheat.[2] So they forced a potato diet upon the wretched peasants who cultivated their estates. Then, in 1846, Ire-

[2] See Commons, Races and Immigrants in America, p. 64ff.

land was confronted by an unprecedented potato-rot which destroyed the sole food staple of the mass of her people. Hundreds perished through sheer starvation. Many more died from diseases brought on by malnutrition. And the English landlords placed the responsibility for this appalling situation upon God! In obedience to the inscrutable workings of an all-wise Providence the blight had come. Well, this "passing of the buck" to the Almighty is very interesting. But is it not also very dangerous? If responsibility for a brutal economic situation can thus easily be transferred from the lords of the land to the Lord of the universe, what hope is there of economic reform? Far more illuminating and hopeful was the diagnosis of the Society of Friends in Ireland, who declared that the calamity which had befallen their little island was "a means permitted by an all-wise Providence to exhibit more strikingly the unsound state of its social condition." Is it claiming too much to say that the future of the Emerald Isle will depend in no small degree upon the conception of God that now prevails, or shall prevail, in the minds of the people of England and in the minds of the people of Ireland?

Some one once said, "An honest man is the

noblest work of God''; to which some one else has replied, ''An honest God is the noblest work of man.'' This second man has commonly been called a cynic. But ought he not rather to be called a seer? An honest God, a God who is great enough and good enough to sustain and inspire the sons of men in an hour like this—is there any need more universal or more pressing? Consider, then, the changing conception of God.

I

The God of a former generation was an absentee God, sitting on the outside of the universe, watching it go. The figure which men used to suggest God's relationship to the world was Paley's famous figure of the watch and the watchmaker. Now, once the watchmaker has made his watch and set it a-going, he has nothing to do with it save wind it up every twenty-four hours and repair it when it gets out of order. By the same token, once God has made his world and set it a-going, he has nothing to do with it save in a time of crisis. God dwells outside the world and enters it only once in awhile when something extraordinary (such as causing a potato-rot) is to be done. Evidence of God's presence is to be found, not in the usual, but only in the

unusual; not in the normal processes of life, but only in the occasional, startling occurrence.

To-day, this conception reminds one almost irresistibly of those spiritualistic seances where (the lights being turned low) one is gravely informed that his dear, dead grandmother is about to communicate with him; and his dear, dead grandmother, who, while alive, was nothing if not a saint, begins to communicate with him by causing a sedate-looking center-table to dance a two-step. How strange that men should look for evidence of the presence of God in "signs and wonders and prodigies and portents." No, not strange, when one considers the beginning of religion in the personalization of natural forces—and the extraordinary vitality of a primitive idea.

But this notion of God as One who dwells outside the universe and enters it only occasionally for the purpose of interfering in some way with the ordinary sequence of events, although it satisfied the minds and hearts of men who lived at the beginning of the nineteenth century, satisfies neither the minds nor the hearts of men who are living now. Indeed, it has become an intolerable conception. For if God is an Absentee Landlord

who returns to his estate only when something extraordinary is to be done, surely we may be allowed to think that just now something extraordinary *needs* to be done. We may even be permitted the question, "Why does not God come and do it?"

The God of our present conception does not live in some remote heaven "above the bright blue sky." His dwelling place is

> ". . . the light of setting suns,
> And the round ocean and the living air,
> And the blue sky, and in the mind of man."

He did not create the world some six thousand years ago and then go off on a long vacation. "In the beginning, God": we too say it. Start with what you will—a bit of protoplasm, a whirling fire-mist, a primal cell. Start when you will—six thousand years back, six hundred thousand years back, inconceivable millions of years back. Still stands that ancient question, In the beginning what? And we answer, "In the beginning, God." But the God in whom we believe to-day is to be found not only at the beginning, but at every moment since the beginning, at work in his world: causing the sun to shine and the rain to fall upon the just and also upon the unjust; setting not one rainbow, merely, but thou-

sands upon thousands of rainbows in his evening sky; causing not one bush, only, but myriads of bushes, in each autumn time, to flame with color; and night after night painting sunsets which not even a Turner can copy.

The God in whom we believe to-day is not a carpenter at work on a house. He is not a sculptor at work on a statue. He is not a painter at work on a canvas. He is a great and good indwelling Spirit, who manifests himself in mountain and mist and tree and flower and the heart of a child. He is the infinite and eternal Energy from which all things proceed. He is the Power, not ourselves, that makes for righteousness.

This is not a new conception of God. The God of our present faith is the God of Saint Paul, "in whom we live and move and have our being"; the God of those Stoic philosophers with whose writings Saint Paul was evidently familiar;[1] the God of the great Greek theologians of the second and third centuries of whom Clement of Alexandria was a splendid representative; the God of Tennyson —"Closer is He than breathing, and nearer than hands and feet." The notion of an immanent God is not anything new under the

[1] In making this statement I am, of course, thinking only of the notion of divine immanence.

sun. It was largely lost to the western world in the fourth century, when Augustine, in the effort to support the ambitious structure of Roman ecclesiasticism, placed an Oriental Potentate upon the throne of the universe. But now, at last, it is being recovered in an age when life once more is running fluid, and thought is free, and democracy is one of the ruling conceptions in the minds of men.

To-day, we look for evidence of the presence of God in all literature and in all history. Did God speak to men in ancient times and then suddenly become dumb? Is all Hebrew literature inspired, and all other literature uninspired? Did God speak through David and not through Browning? Did he speak through Solomon and not through Shakespeare? Through Isaiah and not through Ibsen? We refuse to believe it. Or, again, is all Hebrew history providential and all other history accidental? Did God work through Abraham and not through Abraham Lincoln? Did he work through John the Baptist and not through John Wesley or John Bright? Is there a progressive revelation of God in the history of Israel and no revelation of God in the history of other peoples? We refuse to believe it. We insist upon believing in a *living* God.

II

Just here, however, there rises a question with which many persons are deeply concerned. The God in whom we live and move and have our being, the immanent God of our present conception—is this God a Person with whom one may have fellowship as friend has with friend?

Well, if we are to think about God at all, we must do so in terms of something that has come within the four walls of our own experience. We must search the storehouse of our own consciousness for some symbol by which to represent him. If we refuse to do this, it merely follows that we cannot think about him at all. And if we *must* think of God in terms of some element in our own experience, we *ought* to think of him in terms of the highest and best that we know.

In terms of what, then, shall we think of God? Star dust? Energy? Law? Is any one of these the highest that we know? Is not Kepler, thinking God's thoughts after him, more wonderful than all the stars he has seen through his telescope? Is not Edison, causing light itself to obey him, more wonderful than all the forces at his command? Is not Darwin, announcing his epoch-making theory,

more wonderful than all the laws he has discovered? Is anything so wonderful as personality.

Personality is sometimes acted upon. It is influenced, no doubt, by geographic conditions. One need not go so far as to say with Lombroso that "revolutions are caused by limestone formations." He *may* recognize the part which mountains play, and vast river basins, in the shaping of civilization. It also appears that personality is influenced by economic conditions. One need not agree with the curbstone orator who shouts, "Tell me what you eat, and how you get your living, and I will tell you what you are." He *may* recognize the part which a living wage plays in the fashioning of character. But although it is evident that personality is sometimes acted upon, it is also evident that personality acts. Instances have been known where the situation changed the man. Instances also have been known where the man changed the situation. How different the course of events if certain individuals known to history had never lived nor labored! What would have happened in American politics if Theodore Roosevelt had never wielded the big stick? What would have happened in American history if the man who signed himself A. Lincoln

had been killed by the Indians in the Black Hawk War? How differently European history would read if Napoleon Bonaparte had been less capable or less ambitious! How different organized Christianity would have been if John Wycliffe had died in infancy, or Martin Luther had been struck by the bolt of lightning which killed his friend! How different civilization would have been if Jesus of Nazareth had never been born! Concede that all of these men, including Jesus, were influenced by their geographic and economic environment; the fact remains, big, clear, undeniable, that not only were they acted upon —they acted. They lived, they wrought—and the world was different.

Is there anything within the whole range of human experience that is nearly so wonderful as personality? Since, then, if we are to think of God at all, we must think of him in terms of something that we know; and since we ought to think of him in terms of the highest and best that we know, shall we not think of him in terms of personality? So it is that a man like Browning thinks of God.

"O Saul, it shall be
A face like my face that receives thee, a man like unto me
Shalt thou love and be loved by forever; . . . See the Christ stand.

Browning is not picturing God as a magnified man. He *is* taking the loftiest personality that ever flashed in moral splendor before the astonished eyes of men and daring to think of God in terms of that! Surely, we may believe that God is at least as personal as we are. We cannot define the Lord our God. The moment we attempt to define him we limit him. He is greater than all our definitions. He is more than all our symbols. But granted that personality, as applied to God, is but a symbol, is it not the highest, truest symbol we can ever find?

III

Even when one has accepted the new-old idea of divine immanence, the question remains as to the character of the God who is held to be immanent. And in our time this question is finding one of its most eager expressions in the query, Is God an autocrat or a democrat? That is to say, shall we think of God in terms of autocratic or of democratic institutions?

The God of a former generation was an autocrat. His providence was inscrutable, his ways past finding out. This was true of earthly kings, why should it not be true, likewise, of the heavenly King? Robert Burns made his Holy Willie say,

TO BE SAVED?

"O Thou, that in the heavens does dwell,
Wha, as it pleases best Thysel',
Sends ane to heaven, an' ten to hell,
A' for Thy glory,
And no for onie guid or ill
They've done afore Thee!
. . . . . .
What was I, or my generation
That I should get sic exaltation,
I wha deserv'd most just damnation
For broken laws,
Sax thousand years ere my creation,
Thro' Adam's cause?"[4]

There was a time when such words as these could have been repeated in dead earnest without any suggestion of contemptuous raillery. God was thought of in terms of absolute, irresponsible monarchies. Men were but puppets for the display of divine power.

The age which witnessed this conception of God witnessed all sorts of theological brutalities. Mothers were told that unbaptized babies would suffer forever the torments of hell. Fathers were told that for prodigal sons, who died "out of Christ," there was no hope throughout all the unending future.

Such was the conception of God when the Most High was thought of in terms of irresponsible monarchial institutions.

By permission from Burns's Poems, Every Man's Library, published by E. P. Dutton & Company.

But monarchism in the political world gradually gave place to democracy. In America, liberty-loving colonists declared and achieved their independence, and established a government "of the people, by the people, for the people." In France, a hungry, ragged, frenzied mob battered down the doors of the old Bastile, and shook a continent with their watchwords, "Liberty, Equality, Fraternity." And echoes of this revolution in the political world began to be heard in the theological world. Men who refused to believe in taxation without representation refused also to believe in damnation without explanation. Men who had come to the conclusion that they had certain rights which earthly kings were bound to respect, came likewise to the conclusion that they had certain rights which even God in heaven was bound to respect. And, now, at the close of a world war, in which there were more than seven million battle deaths, men everywhere are beginning to think. And, in steadily increasing numbers, they are beginning to say,

"Before the face of God we swear,
As life is good and sweet
Under the sun,
This horror shall not come again;
Never, never again

Shall twenty million men
Nor twenty, no, nor ten
Leave all God gave them in the hands of one—
Leave the decision over peace and war
To king or Kaiser, president or Tsar."[5]

The labors of lonely, persecuted, freedom-loving dreamers of many centuries have not been in vain. Autocracy is doomed. In the political world not only, but also in the industrial world, autocracy is doomed. It will linger on for a time. It may reveal unexpected vitality. But late or soon autocracy is doomed.

And if, both in the political and in the industrial world, autocracy is destined to give way, how long will it be able to maintain itself in the theological world? How long will an increasingly democratic civilization continue to think of God in terms of autocratic institutions, or tolerate any theological dogma that is born of autocratic conceptions of God? In the coming days, will not God be thought of less and less in terms of court life and more and more in terms of community life? And will not that amazing deed on Calvary be thought of less and less in terms of an ancient sacrificial system (itself the fruit of an autocratic God-notion) and more and more in terms of a willing sacrifice on the part of

[5] I regret my inability to name the author of this poem.

men and women who have come to see that there can be no progress without the paying of a price? The coming generation will feel no need of propitiating kings, human or divine. It will feel the need of striving unto death against sin, against lust and greed and injustice and oppression—everything which drives the light from women's eyes and laughter from the lips of little children.

We need to discover the full significance of Jesus's assertion that God is Father. When men begin to think of God, not in terms of kingship, but in terms of Fatherhood, something happens—something of vast social importance. A new sense of human worth develops. This common man, in overalls, with an unpronounceable foreign name, is worth something. He is worth something to God! He is not merely an instrument; he is an end in himself, one of the many, many human "ends" in whom God Almighty is supremely interested. He is not merely a tool, a shovel, a *thing;* he is a son of God, heir of God, joint heir with Jesus Christ of all the rights and dignity of manhood. Out of this new-old conception of God as Father is coming a new understanding of the sacredness of human life, a new recognition of the dignity of manhood, and so, a new hope for the world.

IV

Another change in the conception of God is to be found in the understanding of his human interest.

He is, first of all, a tribal Deity, concerned with the fortunes of a chosen people. In the case of the people of Israel he is Yahweh, who is bound by a solemn covenant to devote himself to their welfare, provided only that they fulfill his commands. Other nations worship other gods; it is perfectly proper that they should do so. There are as many gods as there are nations. But let the people of Israel worship Yahweh, mighty in time of war. And when Joshua invades the land of Caanan, and captures the city of Jericho, and burns it, and massacres the entire civilian population, he believes that Yahweh is on his side and has given him the victory.

This notion of a tribal deity interested exclusively in a chosen people is singularly persistent. Herbert Spencer used to tell of the British sea-captain who, being pursued by a Dutch man-of-war, felt sure that the wind would change in his favor, for, said he, "God will never desert a fellow countryman."[6] Soon after the Great War began, the British

[6] Quoted by Israel Zangwill in The War for the World, p. 133.

chaplain of the House of Commons declared that "the killing of Germans is a divine service in the fullest sense of the term"; and just across the Channel, the German court preacher returned thanks unto God for his "holy wrath against the enemies of the German people." Later, on both sides of the Channel, and later still on both sides of the Atlantic, many persons surrendered their fancied belief in a universal God, and began to pray to a tribal God. Not alone in Germany, but in England, in France, and in America, God was petitioned to be with "us" ("mit uns") and against "our enemies." Some day, let us hope, we shall be heartily ashamed of this lamentable lapse from a noble monotheism, not to speak of a thoroughgoing Christianity.

But back in Old Testament times there was a prophet who looked forward to the day when there would be a highway out of Egypt into Assyria, and the Assyrian would come into Egypt, and the Egyptian into Assyria, and the Egyptians would worship with the Assyrians. "In that day," said he, "shall Israel be the third with Egypt and with Assyria, a blessing in the midst of the earth; for that the Lord of hosts hath blessed them, saying, Blessed be Egypt my people, and Assyria the

work of my hands, and Israel, mine inheritance.'"[7] William Adams Brown translates this into modern phrase.[8] For Israel he reads Belgium; for Egypt, Germany; for Assyria, England. Then he imagines a Belgian prophet, surveying the ruin and tragedy of war, but looking forward to a brighter day, and saying: "In that day there shall be a highway out of Germany into England, and the English shall come to Germany, and the Germans to England, and the Germans shall worship with the English. In that day Belgium shall be a third with Germany and with England, a blessing in the midst of the earth; for that Jehovah of hosts has blessed them, saying: Blessed be Germany, my people, and England, the work of my hands, and Belgium, mine inheritance." How many of us are thinking at that height even now?

Back in New Testament times, a still greater Prophet cast down barriers which, through centuries, had been building, and not only healed a Gentile's servant, but interested himself in a despised Samaritan woman. And the universalism latent in the teaching of Jesus was magnificently developed by Saint

[7] Isa. 19. 23–25.

[8] See his Is Christianity Practicable? p. 103, Charles Scribner's Sons, publishers.

Paul, who declared that from a truly Christian standpoint there can be neither Jew nor Greek, Scythian nor barbarian, bondman nor freeman; for "Christ is all, and in all."[1]

This is the conception of God to which we are moving. We have had it for a long time as an intellectual possession. But how many of us have it, even now, as a working faith? It is one thing to stand for a kind of ecclesiastical imperialism. (We are all anxious to have our denomination represented at the ends of the earth; incidentally, one may note also the fact that trade follows the missionary as well as the flag.) It is another thing to stand for a real brotherhood of mankind.

We have been contending in this chapter that our thought about God is reflected in our social institutions. The converse of this proposition is perhaps equally true: our social institutions affect, if not determine, our conception of God. In the case of rare prophetic spirits, the thought of God runs on in advance of contemporaneous social achievement. But in the case of the majority of people God is thought of in terms of near-by institutions. And so it may be true that we shall never develop a thoroughgoing belief in a universal God until we have secured some kind of real

[1] Col. 3. 11.

international association. But if only here (in America) and now people could be led to believe that God is no more a respecter of peoples than he is of persons, how much more quickly we could get a genuine league of nations, seeking to secure justice and to maintain the peace of the world!

V

The God of a former generation was a Creator who had created. The God of our present conception is a Creator who is still creating. That is to say, the universe, as we now think of it, is still in the making.

In a book[10] which has been widely read on both sides of the Atlantic, Mr. H. G. Wells throws out the suggestion of a finite Deity. God, says Mr. Wells, is not omnipotent, nor omniscient, nor omnipresent. There are many things he cannot do, many things he does not know, many places in which he is not. He is not coextensive with the universe, and for the universe he is not responsible. Somewhere, in the dawn of mankind, he had a beginning, and as mankind grows, he grows. The God of Mr. Wells is not the Absolute of philosophy nor the Creator of Hebrew theology. He is a supremely great and good Spirit, a loving and

[10] The Invisible King.

lovable Personality, who may be known as friend knows friend, and who is "struggling with us, and in our behalf, against all that threatens us, all that curses us, all that destroys us, and makes us afraid." As for what lies beyond God, Mr. Wells calls it The Veiled Being, and affirms that we do not know anything about it; that, in all probability, we never shall. And Mr. Wells comes to this somewhat startling conclusion because he wants to acquit the Lord of Ages of all responsibility for that awful catastrophe which has deluged Europe with grief and blood.

As for myself, there are two things in this connection which I feel impelled to say.

I cannot rest content with Mr. Wells's belief in a God who is something less than all reality. For me, God must be everywhere, or nowhere—in the farthest star and in the flower at my feet. Soon or late we must deal with the Absolute. If we cannot trust the Absolute; if we know, and can know, nothing about it, how can we feel any assurance that the Absolute will never prove too much for our God? Shall we ever find a working faith, an abiding peace, unless we can venture out upon the belief that God is all and in all?

But this also I believe: the world is not made; it is still in the making. How can one

believe that our world is a finished product—a world that has cancer and insanity in it, child-labor and war? God has not yet attained. He has not yet become perfect, if one may be permitted to mean by "perfection" the completion of a task. But God is pressing on toward the goal which has been revealed to us in Jesus. For me, Jesus is vastly significant. I cannot believe that he represents merely a transient achievement, a glorious accident, a flash in the pan. What I do believe is that what we see in Jesus represents something which dwells eternally in the heart of God.

The world is not yet made. Who could wish that it were otherwise? In a ready-made world there would be nothing left for men themselves to do—no problems to solve, no hardship to endure, no risks to run, and so, no adventure, no real joy. As it is, we can help God. He needs our help. Even the humblest among us may help a little. And is it possible to conceive of any greater joy than that which comes to a man who is consciously and eagerly cooperating with God in the completion of his world-task?

What I feel the need of believing and try to believe is this: the battle in which God and mankind are engaged is a real battle. As Pro-

fessor William James once declared, "If it is not a real fight, it at least feels like one." But the outcome is sure. God is able. God, eventually, supported by forward-looking men and women, will win.

CHAPTER III

SIN

The aim of this chapter is to trace the historic development of the conception of sin for the purpose of discovering what manner of man is a sinner in the light of the highest ethical standards which the race has evolved.

I

Let us suppose that in Central Africa, a few days ago, a half-naked savage touched a corpse. Immediately, in the eyes of his tribe and in his own eyes, he became a sinner. For among primitive peoples the touching of a corpse is taboo; and to disregard the taboo law is to sin. The forbidden act may or may not be inherently immoral. Generally it is not. It does, however, serve a moral purpose by forcing the individual to decide whether he will conform to the tribal demand or disregard it, and so it registers the feeble beginning of moral development.

II

On a somewhat higher level of culture, sin is anything which is offensive to the gods. And

for ancient man it was difficult to know just what was offensive to the gods. One of the hymns used by the Babylonians went like this:

What, however, seems good to one, to a god may be displeasing.
What is spurned by oneself may find favor with a god.
Who is there that can grasp the will of the gods in heaven?
The plan of a god is full of mystery—who can understand it?
How can mortals learn the ways of a god?
He who is still alive at evening is dead the next morning;
In an instant he is cast into grief, of a sudden he is crushed.[1]

In the Old Testament, also, one comes now and then upon some incident which must have filled the minds of those ancient Hebrews with bewilderment and consternation. There is, for example, the story of Uzzah.[2] This young Hebrew and Ahio, his brother, were taking the sacred ark from one city to another. They had placed it upon a new cart drawn by two oxen. At one point along the road the oxen stumbled. The ark tilted. Uzzah instinctively reached forth his hand to steady it. That moment he fell down dead. What a singular concurrence! What did it mean? The ancient historian who records this incident

[1] Quoted by H. Wheeler Robinson in The Religious Ideas of the Old Testament, p. 159. The translation is Jastrow's in Religious Belief in Babylonia and Assyria, p. 333.

[2] 2 Sam. 6. 3ff.

ventures an explanation. He says, "The anger of Jehovah was kindled against Uzzah, and God smote him for his error, and there he died before the ark of Jehovah." He also says, naïvely enough, that David was displeased because Jehovah had thus broken forth on Uzzah, and that David was afraid of Jehovah that day. There is the story, also, of the census that was taken in Israel and Judah.[1] The chronicler says that Jehovah put it into the mind of David to take this census, but that when it was taken the nation suddenly found itself in the grip of an unprecedented plague which in a few days wiped out seventy thousand people. Here, again, is a singular coincidence. What does it mean? The historian thinks that for some reason Jehovah changed his mind and became very angry when his order was carried out. And he says that David built an altar unto Jehovah, and offered burnt offerings and peace offerings, and that then the plague was stayed.

The gods in whom ancient men believed were as autocratic, as arbitrary, and capricious as were the tribal chiefs who exercised earthly authority over them. The god, therefore, must be propitiated. He must be kept in good humor. His ruffled feelings must be

[1] 2 Sam. 24. 10ff.

soothed by the odor of incense. In ancient man the consciousness of sin was just this dread feeling that in some way he had displeased the god, and his constant question was, What must I do to avert his anger? What can I do to secure his favor?

III

In the case of the Hebrew people the many gods give place to one God—Yahweh—whereupon sin becomes defined as rebellion. It is *lese majesty*—a crime against the sovereign. Now and then some prophet insists that sin is involved in any wrong relationship to fellow man, and not only in a wrong relationship to God; or that a sin has been committed against God *because* an injury has been done to some human soul. But this connection is not made by the multitude. The majority are concerned only about God, what he may think and do, not about the human victim of an evil deed.

Interesting indeed (and discouraging) are the survivals of this early conception of sin as *lese majesty*. In his Theology for a Social Gospel, Professor Rauschenbusch relates an incident of which he learned from a health officer in Toronto. In Toronto, if milk is found to be dirty, the cans are emptied by the

inspector and then marked with a large red label. When these cans bearing the scarlet letter are returned to their owner, the whole community is informed of his disgrace. One day a Mennonite farmer found his cans thus labeled. His ire was aroused. He lost his temper and forgot, for the moment, his Mennonite vow. He swore "an unscriptural oath." His voice was heard. He was brought before the church, and tried, and found guilty, and excommunicated; not because he had threatened the lives of Toronto's babies by peddling dirty milk, but because he had taken the name of God in vain!

When sin is thought of as *lese majesty,* a swaggering Prussian officer may run a lame shoemaker through with his saber and get off with a reprimand; but were he to utter a single unguarded word reflecting upon the character of a heaven-appointed emperor, he would be dealt with in summary fashion.

The connection between injury done to one's God and injury done to one's neighbor is a connection which humanity has been slow to make.

IV

The tendency, likewise, to identify sin with some act not in itself immoral rather than

with acts which are inherently immoral is significantly persistent. Professor Robinson[4] has noted the fact that even Ezekiel includes a purely physical reference in a list of sins. Says this undeniably great prophet, "If a man be just, and do that which is lawful and right, and hath not eaten upon the mountains, . . . neither hath defiled his neighbor's wife, . . . and hath not wronged any, but hath restored to the debtor his pledge, hath spoiled none by violence, by robbery, hath given his bread to the hungry, and hath covered the naked with a garment; . . . he is just, he shall surely live." It is a splendid passage, but how curious this reference to eating upon the mountains in the same breath with a solemn adjuration not to defile a neighbor's wife nor take anything by robbery.

A similar instance is presented by the famous nineteenth chapter of Leviticus. Here one finds the ethical expression of the priestly mind at its best. And it is a good best. Consider this: "When ye reap the harvest of your land, thou shalt not wholly reap the corners of thy field, neither shalt thou gather the gleaning of thy harvest. And thou shalt not glean thy vineyard, neither shalt thou gather the fallen fruit of thy vineyard; thou shalt

[4] In "The Religious Ideas of the Old Testament," p. 163.

leave them for the poor and for the stranger.'"[5] Consider also this: "If a stranger sojourn with thee in your land, ye shall not do him wrong. The stranger that sojourneth with you shall be unto you as the homeborn among you, and thou shalt love him as thyself; for ye were strangers in the land of Egypt."[6] (Not bad counsel even for present-day Americans.) And the seventeenth verse reads thus: "Thou shalt not hate thy brother in thine heart.... Thou shalt not take vengeance, nor bear any grudge against the children of thy people, but thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." But in this same nineteenth chapter of the book of Leviticus, you find this: "There shall not come upon thee a garment of two kinds of stuff mingled together." And you find this: "Ye shall not eat anything with the blood." Moreover, when you consider Leviticus as a whole, you are impressed by the fact that chief attention is being given, not to moral considerations, but to ceremonial directions.

Even in Jesus's day, a priest must not touch a dead mouse, and neither priest nor layman must ever eat pig or lobster or rabbit. Montefiore insists that the rabbis of Jesus's day did

[5] Lev. 19. 9, 10.
[6] Ibid., verses 33 and 34.

realize that moral laws were more important than ceremonial laws. But he feels obliged to add this: "However much the good sense and religious feeling of the rabbis may have led them to realize that to love mercy was more important than to abstain from eating rabbits, it would not have entered their heads to argue that as long as you were merciful and loving you might be allowed to eat them." Is it not possible that some of them argued that even though you were not merciful and loving, *provided only you did not eat rabbits,* you might regard yourself with a considerable degree of complacency? Jesus himself is authority for the statement that some of his contemporaries tithed mint and anise and cummin but neglected the weightier matters of justice and mercy and faith. There were men, in his day, who refused to set foot on the pavement of a Gentile courtroom through fear of ceremonial defilement, yet these very men, on that same day, did not hesitate to bring to pass a judicial murder.

Closely akin to this convenient emphasis upon non-moral forms of activity are the ever-recurrent legalisms of religious history. It is very much easier to follow rules, even multitudinous and inconvenient rules, than it is to be kind and thoughtful and sweet-spirited. In

New Testament times there were men who endeavored to follow to the letter every rule for the observance of the Sabbath—and the Sabbatical rules were many and troublesome. But the New Testament story does not give one the impression that these men were especially easy to get along with.

In Scotch Presbyterianism, in New England Puritanism, in nineteenth-century Methodism (to mention but a few of many cases) legalism was revived—with much the same result. It was easier to endure a Scotch Sunday than it was to refuse Scotch whisky. It was easier to sit for two solid hours in a Puritan meetinghouse, listening to a perfectly solid and juiceless discourse, than it was to be charitable toward human frailty or tolerant of the opinions of others. It was, and is, easier to refrain from dancing, card-playing, and theater-going, than it is to be just and generous and honest and unselfish. And if a man can get a reputation for goodness merely by refraining from certain amusements, or by going to church, or by making himself (and others) miserable on the first day of the week, he is, I think one may conclude, at least more apt to choose this path to "goodness" rather than the hard and stony road of moral culture and spiritual conquest.

V

But the conception of sin does not remain on this low level where sin is identified with failure to fulfill some non-moral requirement or some legal enactment. Again, of course, we are speaking historically. In the case of many persons, even now, there is little sense of sin apart from the knowledge of some legal infraction. Provided only they do not violate any law of the land, a considerable number of people are able to live on pretty good terms with themselves. But, historically speaking, the conception of sin rises above the low level to which reference has just been made.

This is evident to anyone who reads with care the great Hebrew prophets. Indeed, even a cursory examination of the utterances of these extraordinary Hebrew preachers will bring one into close contact with ethical reality.

Let any man whose conscience is permitting him to draw dividends from a crooked enterprise listen to Habakkuk saying, "Woe to him that getteth an evil gain for his house, that he may set his nest on high, that he may be delivered from the hand of evil."[7]

Americans who have been in London will

[7] Hab. 2. 9.

remember the beautiful little parks surrounded by splendid residences. These parks are inclosed with an iron fence, the gate of which is kept locked. Keys to the lock are possessed only by the privileged people who dwell in the splendid residences. And, as everyone knows, England has suffered keenly from landlordism, the ownership of great estates by gentlemen who used them as hunting grounds at certain seasons of the year. Let lords of the land listen to Isaiah saying, "Woe unto them that join house to house, who lay field to field, till there be no room."[8]

Let American landlords whose consciences are permitting them to raise rents far beyond the figure which is necessary to secure a fair return on their investment—let them consider Micah's scathing arraignment of the men who, in his day, did likewise.[9] And let the profiteer whose drugged conscience is permitting him to levy a tax upon the necessities of a nation consider what Amos said to the profiteers of his day who "took exactions of wheat," and ground the faces of the poor. "Ye have built houses of hewn stone," declared Amos, "but ye shall not dwell in them"[10]—a saying which,

---

[8] Isa. 5. 8.
[9] Micah 2. 9.
[10] Amos 5. 11ff.

if uttered in America at this present time, by any alien with a Russian name, would probably lead to his deportation without trial.

Micah has an interesting passage in which he says, "The prince asketh, and the judge is ready for a reward; and the great man, he uttereth the mischief of his soul; thus they weave it together." The man whom Micah calls a prince would be known to-day as a politician. What the politician asks for, Micah does not say. But do we need to be told? And the judge, he tells us, is ready for a reward. (Was it from Micah that Mr. Roosevelt got his thunder?) We are left in doubt as to the evil desire of the great man's soul, what it was. (Were he living to-day, we might fancy that it had something to do with lax enforcement of the prohibition law, or, perchance, with the exploitation of Mexico under governmental protection.) But, whatever it was that the great man wanted he managed to get. The great man financed the politician; the politician looked after the interests of the great man; the judge, for a consideration, was willing to oblige both gentlemen; and the people, no doubt, paid the ultimate bill.

Well, Micah stood in the presence of such men and represented Jehovah as hav-

ing a contention with his people. What had he done to them that they should so sin against him? Then this rugged preacher represented the people as inquiring what they must do to get right with Jehovah. Should they come before him with ordinary offerings—calves a year old? Or should they bring unto him extraordinary gifts—thousands of rams, tens of thousands of rivers of oil? Or, if even such gifts were inadequate, should they offer unto him their own children—the fruit of their body for the sin of their soul? (Of how many men, even now, it appears to be true that they are readier to give their sons to the nation in time of war than they are to give a square deal to the nation in time of peace?) Finally, when he had made the situation perfectly clear to his audience, Micah presented his own answer. "Not so," he cried, "what doth Jehovah require of thee but to do justly, to love mercy, and walk humbly with thy God?"[11]

It was as though some modern preacher should stand in Wall Street and say to the passersby, "What does God require of you? Spectacular contributions to philanthropic enterprises—charity as a substitute for justice? What does God require of you? Pious

[11] Micah 6. 6–8.

appeals for an old-fashioned revival of religion? (Even the Wall Street Journal turns preacher, at times, and pleads for an old-fashioned revival of religion, blissfully ignorant of the fact that if ever there should be a revival of anything which Jeremiah or Jesus would pronounce religion, Wall Street would be thrown into a panic.) What does God require of you? Pseudo-patriotic appeals for a one hundred per cent Americanism—americanism spelled with a small 'a' and emptied of all international vision and concern? What does God require of American capital and American labor in this critical hour in the world's life? What but to do justly, to show mercy, and walk humbly with Him who is God the Father of all mankind?''

But when we say that the conception of sin has risen above the low level where it means little more than failure to meet some non-moral requirement or some legal enactment, we are thinking preeminently of Jesus. It was Jesus who said that there is nothing from without the man which, going into him, can defile him; but the things which proceed out of the man are the things which defile him.[12] Out of the heart, said he, come forth evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications,

[12] See Matt. 15. 18.

thefts, false witness, railings. Once that has been spoken and understood, it becomes impossible to say, in one breath, "Thou shalt not defile thy neighbor's wife, nor eat upon the holy mountain." It becomes equally preposterous to say, in the same sentence, "Thou shalt not grind the faces of the poor, nor eat rabbits."

Jesus went to the very root of the matter—the inner attitude. If your inner attitude is wrong, then, according to Jesus, you are wrong, regardless of the character of your occasional acts. With Jesus the question of first importance was not, What are you doing at any particular moment? but, In what direction are you going? There were many pious people who thought that the new teacher was upsetting every reasonable standard of right and wrong. He sat down and ate with publicans and sinners, people who did not bear a good name! Yet for highly respected Pharisees he had only words of scorn. He revealed no trace of anger in the presence of a woman taken in adultery. But his eyes flashed fire in the presence of the well-known citizens who had made of her a public spectacle, and the instrument of an ulterior purpose. Did Jesus, then, condone what we commonly speak of as immorality? By no means! He condemned

not only murder but hate; not only adultery but lust. But in the thought of Jesus, publicans and sinners who had some desire for a better life gave more promise of moral development than did the self-satisfied Pharisees who despised them. And a woman taken in adultery, but crushed and penitent, was nearer purity than were the superficially immaculate accusers whose inner attitude was plainly such that only a favoring opportunity was needed to cause them to sidestep into sin.

Said Jesus, "Except ye turn, and become as little children, ye shall in no wise enter into the kingdom of heaven.'"[12] What did he mean? He could not have meant that a three-year-old child has more to his credit in the way of moral attainment than has the average, decent-lived, middle-aged man. But if a middle-aged man should be satisfied with his moral attainments, there would be vastly more of promise in a little child than in him. For the child would be *teachable,* eager to learn; whereas the self-satisfied adult would have become a moral fossil. Jesus is concerned not so much with moral attainment as with moral direction. In his thought the supreme sin is just moral complacency, a selfish, satisfied, unteachable spirit.

[12] Matt. 18. 3.

VI

A highly developed conception of sin has one other aspect which claims attention. According to a doctrinal statement with which many of us in our youth were familiar, God created in Adam a perfect man, and placed in the hands of this remotest ancestor of the human race the dread responsibility for human destiny. Had Adam remained perfect—well, the statement did not say what would have happened. But Adam sinned, and in his sin, not merely in the consequences of it, but even in the guilt of it, the whole race of men has become involved. Now, some of us can no longer believe in any such fall from a state of pristine purity as this doctrine presupposes. Nor can we believe that any man has resting upon him the *guilt* of his ancestors. Guilt is personal, and cannot be transferred like a physical commodity. But in this we can and do believe: a continuity of evil, stretching back through the centuries, and out over the nations. Beyond doubt we are suffering today in consequence of the sins and mistakes of the millions who have preceded us; suffering in our bodies, our minds, our ideas and ideals, our social and political institutions.

And this also we may believe: we are not

only inheritors of evil, we are participators in evil. A modern prophet[14] has dedicated one of his books "To the millions who toil without hope that the thousands may enjoy without thought." Perhaps there is a bit of injustice in this; certainly there is a touch of bitterness. But we who are profiting by the sweat and toil and tears of others; we who, not deliberately perhaps, but none the less actually, are profiting at the expense of others, how can we escape a sense of condemnation in the presence of a social order so full of injustice as our order is?

Not long ago, in the city of Chicago, a gunman was murdered by another gunman, and in the Chicago Evening Post an editorial declared that for the tragic career of this dead gangster the whole city was responsible. Chicago had permitted him to grow up unbefriended on the city streets, and instead of cultivating the good in him had allowed the evil in him to develop unchecked. There is much else beside the ill-starred career of an occasional gunman for which the community as a whole is responsible. For graft and inefficiency in the city hall; for the miseducation or, at best, the inadequate education of children; for its own exploitation by certain pred-

[14] Vedder in The Gospel of Jesus and the Problems of Democracy.

atory groups—for all this, and more than this, many a community, as a whole, is responsible.

This recognition of corporate guilt is not anything new under the sun. Evidence of it may be found on page after page of the Old Testament. But among modern men it represents a comparatively recent revival, and even now is not as widespread as one could wish. For not until all the people begin to feel responsibility for community conditions will it be possible for communities to be saved.

If only we could get clearly before us that better civilization which every great prophetic spirit has seen from afar!—a truer world, in which every man, woman, and little child would be given a fair chance for self-development; in which men would look upon one another not as foes, nor as competitors, but as friends and brothers; in which love would be the ruling principle, and even-handed justice would be meted out to every humblest son of toil. To say that this is an ideal for whose realization we must long wait and labor is to speak soberly. But to say that this represents an ideal which can never be realized is to become faint of heart. And to jeopardize its realization by greed or by hatred, by cowardice or by complacency, is to

become corrupt of heart. What is sin? Sin is treachery to a great ideal. It is the Benedict Arnold of the human soul betraying the possibility of a better world. It is the selfish, anti-social, cowardly, complacent attitude which would prevent forever the dawning of that brighter day for which all earth's fairest spirits have lived and labored.

CHAPTER IV

SALVATION

We saw in the last chapter that for primitive man the sense of sin was just the uneasy conviction that, having violated some taboo law, he had offended the spirits. The world was full of spirits having the same likes and dislikes as human spirits. Some of these spirits were comparatively powerless, and therefore harmless, and therefore not to be especially concerned about. But others were very powerful, and therefore capable of inflicting injury, and therefore needing to be propitiated. Surrounded by these powerful spirits, primitive man was afraid. Unintentionally, even unknowingly, he might touch something that was taboo; and then they might give him bad luck in the chase, or poison his cattle, or cause his wife to become unfaithful to him, or strike him dead with a bolt of fire. He was anxious, therefore, to keep on good terms with these powerful spirits; and in every way that suggested itself to his dark and troubled mind he endeavored to appease their wrath and win their favor. And so, for primitive

man, salvation meant the sense of security which came with the belief that, as the result of certain rites and offerings, the anger of the spirits had been turned aside and their good will secured.

I

It was, I suppose, to be expected that this primitive notion of salvation should persist for a long time. It, at any rate, has done so, and traces of it may be found in popular thought even now.

The idea that the Supernatural needs to be propitiated does not appear among the Hebrew people (if we may judge from the Old Testament literature) until a relatively late date. Their earliest sacrifices were probably meals at which the deity was invited to be present as the guest of the worshipers. At these sacrificial meals, the flesh of the offering was eaten by the worshipers, after it had been drained of the blood, which was reserved for the deity. Later, the offerings, called "burnt offerings," were entirely consumed upon the altar. "Here the underlying idea would seem to be the conveyance of a gift to the deity by the convenient means of a fire, which turns it into rising smoke."[1] But, after

[1] Robinson, in The Religious Ideas of the Old Testament, p. 144, Charles Scribner's Sons, publishers.

the exile, when the tragic humiliation of a "chosen people" had induced in them a lively consciousness of guilt, burnt offerings gave place to sin offerings. And the moment you find sin offerings, you find the notion that Jehovah needs to be propitiated.

Consider a picture: In the city of Jerusalem the people are fasting, for it is the day of atonement. Already the high priest has offered a sacrifice in expiation of his own sin and the sins of his household. He has removed the gorgeous vestments in which the people are accustomed to see him, and attired himself in a simple linen garment, spotlessly white. At last the dramatic moment arrives when the sins of all Israel are to be atoned for. At the door of the temple stands the high priest. Before him are two goats, resembling each other as closely as possible: the one to be used as a sin offering to Jehovah; the other to be sent into a solitary place, bearing, symbolically, the sins of the people. While the people stand with bated breath, the priest draws lots, made of gold, and ties a cord of scarlet cloth around the neck of the goat that has been chosen as sin-bearer. The goat allotted to Jehovah is then killed, and its blood sprinkled upon the Mercy Seat in the Holy of holies. This done, the priest returns

to the outer court, places both hands upon the living goat, and confesses over it the sins of the people: "We beseech thee, O Lord, Thy people, the house of Israel, have done iniquitously, transgressed, and sinned before Thee. We beseech thee, O Lord, forgive now the iniquities, the transgressions, and the sins wherein thy people, the house of Israel, have done iniquitously, transgressed, and sinned before thee." Accompanied by leading citizens, the goat is then led away to the edge of the wilderness, and thence, by a lone individual, to the brow of a precipice, to be cast over backward, and dashed to pieces among the rocks below. When evening comes, the fast is broken, and the people surrender themselves to unrestrained rejoicing; for the sins of a nation have been not only atoned for, but removed from its borders, and the approval of the Most High is resting upon them.[2]

This solemn scene speaks for itself. There is an ethical grandeur here which all will feel. But is there not also a survival of the primitive notion that an offended Deity must be propitiated by some kind of offering?

This notion of a God who requires to be

---

[2] Leviticus 16. See also article in Hastings's Dictionary on "Day of Atonement," by S. R. Driver and H. A. White. This article contains quotations from the Mishnic treatise Yoma, which gives fresh details

propitiated appeared again in mediæval theology which set forth such ideas as these. Through the sin of Adam the whole human race had come under the condemnation of God, and under sentence of eternal banishment from his presence. But God, in his undeserved compassion, had devised a plan of salvation. According to this plan, God's own Son had descended to earth, and gone through a program which began at Bethlehem and ended on Calvary. The program called for Bethlehem. But, really, Jesus had lived only that he might die. Not by the life that he lived but by the death that he died he had made it possible for God to forgive a guilty, imperiled race. Harsher forms of the doctrine asserted that Jesus by his death had turned aside the wrath of his Father, and induced in God a *willingness* to forgive. In either case, all that remained for men to do was to "accept" this plan of salvation which God had provided.

As everyone knows, this mediæval conception has projected itself into modern thinking. It appears in the well-known refrain, "Jesus paid it all," and, indeed, in many of the hymns which are still sung in the churches. Down even to our own time, men have been told that God needed to be propitiated, that he

was propitiated by Jesus's death on the cross, and that what now remains for erring mortals to do is "accept" this offering which Jesus has made.

II

But neither the prophets nor Jesus found any obstacle to forgiveness in the heart of God.

The belief of the prophets is reflected in the well-known saying, "Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts; and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon.'"[3] What must the evil man do to obtain pardon? Only forsake his evil way and return to the Lord! The Lord is ready and eager to forgive. He will "abundantly pardon."

Indeed, there are instances not a few in which the prophets reveal an angry impatience with the whole sacrificial system. "To what purpose is the multitude of your sacrifices unto me? saith the Lord: I am full of the burnt offerings of rams, and the fat of fed beasts; and I delight not in the blood of bullocks, or of lambs, or of he-goats. . . . Wash you, make you clean; put away the evil

[3] Isa. 55. 7.

of your doings from before mine eyes; cease to do evil: learn to do well; seek judgment, relieve the oppressed, judge the fatherless, plead for the widow.'"[4] So Isaiah. "Wherewith shall I come before the Lord, and bow myself before the high God? Shall I come before him with burnt offerings, with calves of a year old? Will the Lord be pleased with thousands of rams, or with ten thousands of rivers of oil? shall I give my first-born for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul? He hath showed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the Lord require of thee but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?'"[5] So Micah. "I hate, I despise your feasts, and I will take no delight in your solemn assemblies. Yea, though ye offer me your burnt offerings, and meal offerings, I will not accept them: neither will I regard the peace offerings of your fat beasts. . . . But let justice roll down as waters, and righteousness as a mighty stream.'"[6] So Amos.

The Psalms, as a whole, reflect the priestly conception of propitiatory sacrifice. But they contain at least a few wonderful passages in

---

[4] Isa. 1. 10ff.
[5] Micah 6. 6–8.
[6] Amos 5. 21–24.

which the prophetic demand for a right inner attitude finds unforgettable expression. The author of the fortieth psalm says:

"Sacrifice and meal-offering thou hast no delight in;
Burnt offering and sin offering hast thou not required.
Then said I, Lo, I am come;
In the roll of the book it is written of me:
I delight to do thy will, O my God.'"[7]

And who does not recall that splendid utterance of the author of the fifty-first psalm?—

"Thou delightest not in sacrifice, else would I give it;
Thou hast no pleasure in burnt offering.
The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit:
A broken and a contrite heart, O Lord, thou wilt not despise.'"[8]

Israel's greatest spirits found no obstacle to forgiveness in the heart of God. They felt no need of propitiating God. They felt tremendously the need of a changed attitude on the part of an evil man.

And Jesus? Theologians have taken us into a countinghouse, and introduced us to

[7] Psa. 40. 6–8.
[8] Psa. 51. 16, 17.

an inexorable creditor, demanding the payment of the last pound of flesh. They have taken us also into a courtroom, and introduced us to an inexorable judge, insisting that the last demand of an abstract justice shall be met. But Jesus takes us into a home, where a younger son has played the fool, and introduces us to a broken-hearted father who is willing to forgive, who can forgive, who does forgive, the moment his disillusioned boy comes penitently home. Jesus has nothing to say about the need of propitiating God. What he says about God is, "While he [the penitent prodigal] was yet afar off, his father saw him, and was moved with compassion, and ran and fell on his neck, and kissed him."[9] Is not this the gospel, the good news? There is no obstacle to forgiveness in God, but only in man; and the one condition of forgiveness is a thoroughgoing repentance.

III

It is this gospel of the prophets and of Jesus that we need. What inspiration is there for modern men in a conception of God which insists that God will not, or cannot, forgive until he has been in some way propitiated?

Consider some of the things which we are

[9] Luke 15. 20

trying to do to-day. In our schools of correction, our so-called reformatories, in some of our State prisons, even, we are seeking no longer merely to punish men; we are seeking to save them. We are seeking no longer merely to satisfy the demands of an abstract justice; we are seeking to make good citizens out of men who have become bad citizens. We once said, " 'Let the punishment fit the crime' —an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth." But we are now saying, "Let the punishment fit the criminal." What people like Thomas Mott Osborne want to know is not, What punishment should be meted out to this man in view of what he has done? but, What help should be given to this man in view of what he may become? That is to say, the aim of modern penology is no longer vindictive; it is redemptive. And there are those who believe that this aim should be our guide in dealing, not alone with a sinning individual, but also with a sinning nation; that the world's question concerning Germany, for example, should be, not, What punishment should be meted out to Germany in view of what she has done? but, What help should be given to Germany in view of the part which she ought to play in the future life of the world? (There are times when in order effectively to "help" a sinning

man or a sinning nation, penalty must be imposed; but it should be imposed redemptively, never vindictively.) There is, I venture to believe, a steadily growing number of persons who have no faith in measures that are purely vindictive. They can see no hope for a better world in policies which demand an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth. Such policies have miserably failed. They are coming increasingly to believe that the one hope of a decent civilization lies in the acceptance of the teaching, "Do good—even to those who hate you."

What inspiration is there for such people in a conception of God which insists that God either will not or cannot forgive until he has obtained "satisfaction" for his sense of injury, or for his sense of justice? Does not such a conception cause God to appear morally inferior to the best men and women of our time, who are loyally subordinating every personal, private consideration, and seeking, not to secure the last demand of an abstract justice, but to save the lives of men and of nations, and to build a better world?

IV

What *is* salvation? The best intelligence and the best conscience of this present time unite in saying that sin, fundamentally, is

selfishness—the mean decision to secure one's own pleasure, or one's own profit, without any regard to the highest welfare of other people, and without any concern for the purpose of God. If this be sin, can salvation be anything less, or other, than the spirit which says, "I am come not to be ministered unto but to minister"? and, also, "Lo, I am come to do thy will, O God"?

The tests of salvation, what are they? Ecclesiasticism has asked: "Do you believe? Can you accept without mental reservations the teaching of the church?" Jesus said, "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven.[10] Ecclesiasticism has asked, "Do you feel satisfied?"—which, being interpreted, has often meant, "Have you had an emotional experience according to type?" Jesus declared, "By their fruits ye shall know them."[11] Ecclesiasticism has said, "If you will accept our teaching and conform to our ritual, we will recognize you as a member of the household of faith, our brother, our sister, our mother." Jesus said, "Whosoever shall do the will of God, the same is my brother, and

[10] Matt. 7. 21.
[11] Matt. 7. 20.

sister, and mother.'"[12] The tests of salvation employed by many forms of ecclesiasticism—how superficial they are as compared with the searching tests of Jesus!

V

But now a most important question confronts us, namely, How is salvation to be secured—the sort of salvation recognized by the great Hebrew prophets and by Jesus? Our own answer would be somewhat as follows:

1. By repentance—a thoroughgoing repentance, involving shame and sorrow and a change of attitude. And this, we believe, can be most certainly induced by opening a man's eyes to the consequences of his sin in other people's lives. We noted above that Jesus, when speaking of forgiveness, takes us into a home, and introduces us to a father who is grieving over the moral loss of his son. Where will one find a more terrific revelation of the damnableness of sin than in some home where the innocent are suffering in consequence of the deeds of the guilty?

Consider the case of a gently nurtured and fine-spirited woman who discovers, too late, that her husband is a beast. As he sits in her

[12] Mark 3. 35.

presence, dazed by liquor, or consumed by lust, every spiritual thing in him submerged, her soul writhes in anguish; she is *wounded* by his transgressions. Or consider a case such as this: A few years ago The Outlook published a story purporting to be true. The author said that in a luxurious European hotel a friend of his talked one day with an American business man who had great possessions. In the course of the conversation the friend remarked, "What a source of satisfaction a great business such as yours must be!" But the man who had great possessions looked fixedly before him as he replied, "Yes, yes, but what does it all amount to when your son is a fool?"

It is not an inexorable creditor nor an inexorable judge, it is a wounded wife, a grieving parent, who brings home to us the hatefulness of sin.

And it is just this terrific revelation of the consequences of sin in some other life that will bring a man to his senses if anything can. In Brieux's terrible play, Damaged Goods, the young husband does not realize the enormity of his offense, nor does he feel any regret for it, until, in his baby's frightful affliction, and his wife's hoarse cry of despair, he sees what havoc his sin has wrought in two

innocent lives. And how many a man has kept on sinning without any suggestion of remorse, until, one day, in his mother's face, certain lines, which he has put there, force him to realize that she has been *bruised* by his iniquities. If the knowledge that by his lust, or by his selfishness, he has blighted the lives of innocent persons does not cause a man to "come to himself," is there anything that will?

And what if God too suffers in consequence of human sin? What if there is a cross in the heart of the Eternal? What if, whenever a man sins, the whole universe is vitally affected, and some purpose is frustrated, some good unachieved? What if sin has cosmic consequences!

Men are saved by repentance. They are brought to repentance by some terrific revelation of the results of sin.

2. By faith. A distinguished neurologist has recently conducted an interesting and significant experiment.[13] He induced three young men to submit themselves to an experiment for the purpose of testing the effect of mental suggestion on physical strength. They were in-

[13] See The Spirit, Streeter and Others, the chapter contributed by Captain J. Arthur Hadfield of the Ashhurst Neurological War Hospital, Oxford. The Macmillan Company, publishers.

structed to grip a dynamometer and exert their will to the utmost. He tested them first in their normal waking condition. Then he hypnotized them, and tested them under the "suggestion" that they were weak; and again, under the "suggestion" that they were very strong. In their normal waking condition, they gave an average grip of one hundred and one pounds. Under the suggestion of weakness, they gave an average grip of twenty-nine pounds. Under the suggestion of great strength, they gave an average grip of one hundred and forty-nine pounds. As the result of this and other similar experiments the investigator concludes that "when our minds are depressed with the idea of weakness, our strength may be diminished by two thirds; whereas, if we have the stimulus of a great inspiration, our strength may thereby be increased by one half." What a commentary on the saying, "Thy faith hath made thee whole."[14]

Long before the Christian era men were cured of physical ills by faith. The earliest diagnosis of disease was "possession." Not only madness and epilepsy, but every kind of ailment was attributed to the presence of some evil spirit. And the earliest method of

[14] Mark 5. 34.

treatment was exorcism. The means employed were many and various; grotesque, sometimes, and even horrible. But the primitive medicine-man's success (when he had it) was due, not to his medicines or his incantations, but to the patient's faith in him and in them.

Of the remarkable cures performed by Jesus, Mark's Gospel reports twelve with some detail. The method of treatment was, in two cases, the use of spittle and the laying on of hands; in two, merely a touch; in the rest, merely a word of command. But it is very apparent that whatever the method, its purpose was to quicken the faith of the patient. And is it not also evident that it was the patient's faith that effected the cure? The power of recovery was present, though latent. What Jesus supplied was the all-important quickening touch.

Shortly before the Master went to his doom he called his disciples' attention to the extraordinary cures which he had been able to perform, and then surprised them by saying, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do.'"[15] During the apostolic period men who

[15] John 14. 12.

"believed on Jesus" did do just such wonderful works of healing as he himself had performed. And to-day, by similar methods, the psychotherapist is accomplishing wonders. In the Ashhurst Neurological War Hospital, in Oxford, the blind are being enabled to see, the deaf to hear, the lame to walk, and the dumb to sing.[16]

If faith is the victory by which men are overcoming physical ills, it must likewise be the victory by which they shall overcome moral ills.

Here is a man named Zacchæus.[17] He is not a desirable citizen. All his neighbors look down upon him; he, therefore, looks down upon himself. He has lost all faith in himself, and is in a very bad way. But one day there comes to his village a Man with a reputation for wisdom and piety; a Prophet, in fact, held in high honor by the people. And this Prophet singles out Zacchæus. In the presence of the neighbors who have snubbed this undesirable citizen, he says, "Zacchæus, I am inviting myself to dine at your house." And when Jesus looks into the eyes of his host and says, "Remember, Zacchæus, you also are a son of Abraham; yours also are the memo-

[16] The Spirit, Streeter and Others, p. 110.
[17] Luke 19. 1ff.

ries, the hopes, the heritage of Israel," something happens to the community's "bad man." *He begins to have faith in himself.* And by this freshly begotten faith he is saved, —so truly saved that he wants to give half his goods to the poor, and, in every case where he has swindled anyone, to make fourfold restitution.

This happened in Jericho long ago. It is still happening in Chicago. That is to say, there are men in Chicago who are being saved by faith. In Hull House they are being saved by the faith begotten in them by Jane Addams. In Chicago Commons they are being saved in like manner by the faith begotten in them by Graham Taylor. Men who had concluded that they were altogether worthless (an exceedingly dangerous mental condition) are saying, "I am worth something to Graham Taylor; perhaps I am worth something to God." Men who, awhile ago, in the presence of terrible temptation and overwhelming discouragement, were saying, "It's no use; I've tried, and tried again, but always failed," to-day, because some one has believed in them, are beginning to believe in themselves and to say, "I can." They are being saved, these men, by faith.

In the case of many of the cures performed

by Jesus the faith of the patient was reenforced by the faith of his friends. Many a man who is morally sick needs to have his faith quickened and strengthened by the faith of others. "Whose soever sins ye forgive, they are forgiven unto them; whose soever sins ye retain, they are retained."[18] The use to which this saying has been put by the proponents of sacerdotalism has blinded many people to its extraordinary significance. As a defense of presumptuous authority on the part of a politically-minded priesthood it is pernicious; but as a statement of the power of a community to assist or thwart the moral recovery of its erring members it is indisputable. Speaking in his pulpit in Columbus one evening, Washington Gladden exclaimed, "How many a hapless woman is walking these streets to-night, outside her paradise; and the flaming sword which prevents her return is not God's wrath, but man's relentlessness! God's forgiveness can hardly be made effective in her case because of man's—and woman's—unforgiveness."[19]

In Victor Hugo's immortal story Jean Valjean leaves prison walls only to find society

---

[18] John 20. 23.

[19] Washington Gladden, The New Theology, McClellan Company, publishers, Columbus, Ohio.

suspicious, resentful, hostile. As soon as it is learned that he is an ex-convict he is refused work, food, kindness. Late at night, having tramped all day without anything to eat, he knocks at the door of a cottage where a light is still burning. When the cottager opens the door, he asks for a bit of food, and for lodging, even though it be in the stable. The cottager looks at him intently for a moment, and then with the exclamation, "Are you the man?" reaches for his gun. "For pity's sake a drop of water," pleads Jean Valjean. "Rather a gun shot," replies the man. That night something died in the soul of the ex-convict. Its name was Hope. He committed an offense, not serious. He committed another offense, very serious. He developed murder in his heart. It was only when the good Bishop forgave him, *and insisted upon believing in him,* that hope, faith, and goodness were reborn in the soul of Jean Valjean.

By faith are we saved. And, very often, the faith which saves us is begotten in us by those who believe in us, and encourage us to believe in ourselves.

Faith reaches its climax of redemptive power when it links a man to his Maker. George Eliot lights up a well-known fact when

she says: "Ideas are often poor ghosts. Our sun-filled eyes cannot discern them. . . . But sometimes they are made flesh. They breathe upon us with warm breath; they touch us with soft, responsive hands; they look at us with sad, sincere eyes, and speak to us in appealing tones; they are clothed in a living human soul, with all its conflicts, its faith, and its love. Then their presence is a power." That is what happens when a man passes from bare morality to religion. The abstract demands of right and duty—we at least partly know what they are. But the good which we would we do not; the evil which we would not we practice. Bare morality leaves us cold and weak. But religion introduces the personal element, and what a difference that makes! What we cannot (at least we do not) do when moved only by abstract notions of right and duty, we can and do accomplish when moved by enthusiastic loyalty toward some great and commanding personality.

In the unforgettable chapter on "The Beloved Captain," Donald Hankey says, "There is not one of us but would gladly have died for him." The Beloved Captain himself dies. He is killed by a shell while endeavoring to save some of his men. And Donald Hankey writes: "But he lives. Somehow he lives.

And we who knew him do not forget. We feel his eyes upon us. We still work for that wonderful smile of his." When Jesus died, his disciples began, after a time, to say, "But he lives; somehow, he lives."[20] And they did not forget him. They continued to work for that wonderful smile of his. Can anyone estimate the power of the motive, For Christ's sake? For Christ's sake, men have undertaken and accomplished the seemingly impossible.

Religion introduces the personal element. It lifts the hard, forbidding demands of abstract morality into the glow and power of a great personal devotion. And Christianity insists not only that men may seek and find God but that God is seeking to find men. Francis Thompson does a daring thing in his poem "The Hound of Heaven." He pictures the Eternal as a Heavenly Hunter, pursuing each human soul until he catches it.

"I fled Him down the nights and down the days;
I fled Him down the arches of the years;
I fled Him down the labyrinthine ways
Of my own mind; and in the midst of tears
I hid from Him, and under running laughter.
Up vistaed hopes I sped;
And shot, precipitated
Adown Titanic glooms of chasmed fears,
And those strong feet that followed, followed after."

[20] The author intends no denial here of an "appearance" of Jesus after his crucifixion.

But Francis Thompson, picturing the Eternal as a Heavenly Hunter, is merely following the lead of Jesus, who pictured him as a Heavenly Shepherd, going out into the night and the storm to seek and save that which was lost.

To sin and know that you have sinned; to be unclean or selfish; to disappoint those who have trusted you and wound those who have loved you; to haul down, like a coward, the flag of your own ideals; to become contemptible, if not in the eyes of others, at least in your own eyes; to discover that you are not only wicked at times but weak, pitifully weak; and then, conscious both of guilt and of weakness, to appeal for help to the Source of Life —and get it; to have such an experience is *to believe in the power of God to save a man.* And the man to whom this experience comes, will he not also believe that, all the time, the Heavenly Hunter has been pursuing him, the Heavenly Shepherd has been seeking his lost sheep?

3. Salvation, in the Christian sense, demands faith in Jesus. "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" Still stands that ancient answer, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved, thou and thy house." But this is the theme of the next chapter.

CHAPTER V

JESUS CHRIST THE HOPE OF THE WORLD

When Jesus died, his followers numbered not more than five hundred persons, most of whom belonged to what a cultivated European would almost certainly call the "lower classes." And when Paul, his apostle, tramped the long, hot roads of Asia Minor, it is doubtful whether he attracted any more attention in that vast contemporaneous Roman world than did Bishop Thoburn in India, or Robert Moffatt in China, during the early years of their missionary labors.

But, in the second century, the Roman Pliny was speaking with admiration of the bands of Christians who met every week and worshiped Christ as God, and bound themselves with an oath not to steal nor to be immoral. These Christians were persecuted. But Tertullian could boast that the more his fellow Christians were persecuted the more numerous they became, the blood of the martyrs becoming the seed of the church. In the year 325 a professed follower of Jesus sat on the throne

of the Cæsars. In the sixth century the Germans, in the seventh the Scandinavians, in the ninth the Saxons, acknowledged Jesus as Master and Lord. At the beginning of the nineteenth century, the professed followers of Jesus numbered three hundred millions. At the beginning of the twentieth century, they numbered five hundred and thirty-five millions, or one third of the population of the world. And each new day sees the number grow. Europeanized South Africa, with ten million people, is said to be predominantly Christian. The Christians of India number four million. In Korea one out of every sixty-six of the population is a Christian. On the surface, then, it would appear to be true that the kingdoms of the world are becoming the kingdoms of our Lord and of his Christ.

I

But appearances are sometimes deceptive. And the awful experience through which the world has just passed has forced us to look beneath the appearance of things, at the reality of things. The big guns have not only blown away the topsoil and laid bare the subsoil of northern France; they have blown away the veneer and laid bare the realities of our Western civilization. And now, is there

anyone who really believes that Christendom is Christian? When the war began, we said a great many eloquent things about the need of preserving a Christian civilization. To-day, we are less eloquent, perhaps, certainly less rhetorical; but we are clearer visioned, and, if we speak of a Christian civilization at all, it is sadly to confess that we do not have it—and never did.

Some of us have discovered that we ourselves are not Christian. In our present mood, we cannot identify Christianity with church membership; nor can we identify it with intellectual orthodoxy. When we think of Christianity we think of Jesus, and begin to ask ourselves whether we possess his spirit. Some of us have felt obliged to acknowledge that we do not. We have not in us that mind "which was also in Christ Jesus: who, being in the form of God, counted it not a prize to be on an equality with God, but emptied himself, taking the form of a servant, . . . becoming obedient even unto death, yea, the death of the cross." There is not in us that antiseptic cleanness of thought and motive which men found in him, nor that magnificent courage which led him to risk his future in the name of an ideal, nor that amazing magnanimity which caused him to forgive his enemies,

nor that mighty unselfishness which prompted him to lay down his life for his friends.

Nearly two thousand years ago, when Jesus came to the turn in the Bethany road, as it winds around the Mount of Olives, whence it is possible to see Jerusalem, he stopped. And as he looked upon that famous city, with its white temple gleaming in the sunlight, and its mansions of white marble rising on terrace above terrace until they culminated in the palace of Herod, far famed for its beauty, he wept. He knew only too well that Jerusalem was like unto a whited sepulcher, outwardly fair to look upon, but within full of all uncleanness and dead men's bones. What would he do if he were to look to-day upon London, or Paris, or New York, or Chicago? Try to imagine the reaction of Jesus to the well-known conditions of a modern city's slums. There is a fairly well authenticated story to the effect that the Japanese government once sent an embassy to England to observe Christianity in action, and that, after the embassy had visited those portions of England's metropolis which Charles Booth called Darkest London, they reported to their government that it would not be worth while to make Christianity the national religion of Japan.

James Russell Lowell once wrote some lines which must have brought a blush of shame to the cheek of his generation:

> "Then Christ sought out an artisan,
> A low-browed, stunted, haggard man,
> And a motherless girl, whose fingers thin
> Pushed from her faintly want and sin.
> These he set in the midst of them,
> And, as they drew back their garment hem,
> For fear of defilement, 'Lo here,' cried he,
> 'The images ye have made of me!'"

It is only fair to say that these bitter lines do not condemn us as they condemned the generation which preceded us. One does not recognize the typical artisan of the present time (drawing more per day than a college professor) in Lowell's "low-browed, stunted, haggard man." Nor does he recognize the typical woman worker in the "motherless girl, whose fingers thin" push "from her faintly want and sin." But it cannot be denied that in the industrial world of Lowell's day women were injured and men brutalized. Men and women both were used as mere instruments for the production of wealth which they themselves were not permitted to share.

From the greed and cruelty, the ruthless exploitation, of those days, we are suffering still—suffering in the presence of millions of

stunted bodies, millions of warped and twisted minds, millions of suspicious, resentful, embittered hearts. Nor can anyone even now say that the industrial world has become Christian. The best that anyone can say is that here and there, with splendid daring, the principles of Jesus are being applied to industrial relationships; that here and there the great, fundamental Christian contention that a man is an end in himself, and not merely a means to an end, is being recognized and honored.

And, finally, there is this other fact, startling, terrible, disillusioning. We had been listening with rapt attention to a famous lecture on the Prince of Peace. An American philanthropist had built, at The Hague, a beautiful temple, and dedicated it in the name of Peace. We had talked about peace at many a Peace Conference. There were those who said and believed that another war of major importance was not to be thought of. Meanwhile, we kept on piling up armaments, and powerful groups of competing capitalists kept on asking their several governments to back them to the limit in a wild race for markets and raw materials. Then came August, 1914; Austria's brutal ultimatum to Serbia; Sir Edward Grey's frantic, eleventh-hour attempt

at intervention; Germany's deliberate refusal of arbitration; Russia's insistence upon mobilization—and long before snow fell, Europe had become a huge battlefield, where night after night the silent stars looked down upon the bivouac of the dead. And whereas, in the second century, amazed Romans exclaimed, "Behold how these Christians love one another!" in the twentieth century, amazed Orientals exclaimed, "Behold how these Christians hate one another!" There are no effects without a cause. The World War, certainly, was not an effect without a cause. And now that we are beginning to see what the causes were—the economic as well as the political causes—we are constrained to acknowledge that the civilization out of which it came was far more pagan than Christian.

There is, I suppose, at least some encouragement in just this fact that now, at last, we have got our eyes open. We are no longer living in a fool's paradise. We are no longer self-deceived. The light that is in us is no longer darkness. We may not be as sentimentally pious as we once were; we are certainly more honest, more courageous. We are now ready to admit that Christianity cannot be identified with Western civilization. We know now that vast areas of life, even in our

Western world, have never been Christianized. Much of our personal life is not Christian, for it is animated by the spirit of selfishness, not by the spirit of service. Much of our industrial life is not Christian; it is operated not in accordance with the Golden Rule, but only in accordance with the rule of gold. Much of our national life is not Christian. In his famous farewell address, Washington reminded his countrymen that it is folly in one nation to look for disinterested favors from another. And even to-day, the difficulty of getting responsible heads of governments to look out over the world through Christian eyes is everywhere manifest. We see now that Christendom is not Christian.

II

It would be manifestly ungenerous and untrue to say that Christianity has done nothing to improve the lot of mankind since Jesus lived and died. If one were to make such a statement as that would not the very stones cry out in protest? To mention no other gains, the elevation of woman, the modern concern for child welfare, the increasing recognition of the sacredness of human life, bear eloquent witness to the social contribution of the Christian enterprise. One may acknowl-

edge the working of other forces in the production of these great human gains and still maintain that Christianity has played a gallant and conspicuous part in bringing them to pass. We must not let our disappointment over the present situation blind us utterly to the really splendid achievements which stand to the credit of the Christian Church. Might it not be contended that the present world-wide unrest is itself evidence of the fact that organized Christianity has not labored in vain? The leaven of Jesus's gospel has been permitted to work. But when all this has been granted, we are still confronted by a broken and bleeding world, and the question will not down, Why, after nearly two thousand years of reputedly Christian endeavor, are we no nearer to the kingdom of God?

The answer which this chapter ventures to give does not pretend to be exhaustive. We are seeking only to point out certain directions in which an answer may be found. And first, in the institutionalizing of Christianity. It may be conceded at once that this was by no means wholly undesirable. A bodiless Christianity would have been impotent, at the downfall of the Roman empire, to gather up the fragments of a shattered civilization, bring order out of chaos, educate semibar-

barous peoples, and reshape the life of the western world. But what happened was this: It is the fifth century, and that proud and powerful empire which caused so many Christians to perish miserably in bloody arenas has itself perished. Perished? Yes, but it lives again. The dead Roman empire has come to life in the Roman Church. The bishop of Rome becomes the Cæsar of a new Roman empire, baptized in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. He surrounds himself with all the pomp and power of an Oriental monarch, he who stands in the eyes of the world as the earthly representative of Jesus—the Jesus who said, "The kings of the Gentiles exercise lordship over them; . . . but ye shall not be so: but he that is the greater among you, let him become the younger; and he that is chief, as he that doth serve."

We have no disposition at this point to throw stones at the Roman Catholic Church. They who live in glass houses are not in a position to throw stones. The point is that the moment a great ideal becomes embodied it must work under the handicap of its body. The body begins to adjust itself to its political and economic environment, and in this process of adjustment the ideal which the body is

supposed to incarnate is subtly changed. It is easy enough for a Protestant to stand and pray thus with himself: "I thank thee, O God, that I am not as these Roman Catholics who have diluted the ideal of Jesus and accommodated themselves to a non-Christian environment." But where is the Protestant Church concerning which no similar accusation could be made? Have the Methodists or the Baptists or the Presbyterians maintained the ideal of Jesus in its pristine purity and steadfastly refused to adjust themselves to a non-Christian social order?

It is difficult for institutions to maintain themselves when they are denied political protection—not impossible, perhaps, but difficult; and once and again, in order to secure political favor, organized Christianity has submitted to some situation that was flagrantly unchristian. It is likewise difficult for institutions to maintain themselves without financial support; and once and again, in order to secure seemingly necessary financial support, organized Christianity has been careful not to examine too minutely the sources of its income. It is written concerning Jesus, "The devil taketh him unto an exceeding high mountain, and showeth him all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them; and he said

unto him, All these things will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me." Jesus replied, "Get thee hence, Satan; for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve." But organized Christianity, once and again, has closed with the offer.

Why, after nearly two thousand years of reputedly Christian endeavor, are we still so far away from a righteous civilization? Another direction in which we may look for an answer to this question is the intellectualizing of Christianity.

When the frightened warden of the Philippian prison called out, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" Paul and Silas answered, "Believe on the Lord Jesus, and thou shalt be saved, thou and thy house." This answer has become historic. Down through the centuries it has furnished the cue to Christian preachers and teachers. To men asking, "What must we do to be saved?" the accredited representatives of the Christian Church have ever replied, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ."

Well, in those first anxious years of the new Faith, to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ involved a very real and daring kind of personal adventure. We are informed that the grate-

ful warden did believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and that during that strange, wild night he and all his family were baptized. What happened to him afterward is not reported. Very likely he lost his job, if not his head. For this man, the decision to believe on Jesus involved a sharp and heroic break with the past, a reorganization of ideas and ideals, a new kind of life.

But as Christianity moved westward it came under the influence of Greek philosophy; and in the attempt to adjust itself to a Greek civilization it underwent serious change. A day came when belief on the Lord Jesus Christ was understood to mean something very different from what it had meant to Paul and Silas and the Philippian jailor. To believe on Jesus was to accept certain speculative opinions concerning the relationship between the Jesus of history and Deity. It may be urged, no doubt, with considerable force that the Logos idea was altogether the most fitting medium through which to bring home to the Greek mind the significance of Jesus. Greeks could not think of him in connection with the Jewish term "Messiah"; they could think of him in connection with the philosophical term "Logos." But what we are concerned to point out here is the shift in

emphasis from a moral demand to an intellectual demand. The Jesus of history said, "If any man would come after me, let him deny himself, and take up a cross, and follow me." And something like that was demanded of the Philippian jailor when he "believed on the Lord Jesus Christ." In a very real sense he took up a cross. But a day finally came when belief on the Lord Jesus Christ involved little more than intellectual assent to a statement concerning him in the official creed.

In this intellectual sense men have believed on Jesus. But have they been saved? When a man is pronounced saved, it is not impertinent to inquire from what he has been saved. He has been saved, perhaps, from all worry concerning his own (celestial) future. But has he been saved from all desire to enrich himself in ways which cause other people to worry about their (terrestrial) future? Has he been saved from greed, from lust, from hate, from covetousness? In how many cases have men who thus believed on the Lord Jesus Christ been saved from nothing from which a man needs to be saved if he is to make any contribution toward a better civilization!

It is a significant fact that the creeds of Christendom make no moral demands. It would be possible, I suppose, to repeat the

Apostles' Creed in a way that would be morally meaningful:

I believe in God the Father Almighty—and will endeavor to do his will.

I believe in Jesus Christ, his only begotten Son, our Lord—and earnestly pray that there may be in me that mind which was also in Christ Jesus.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, in the presence and power of the living God—and desire that his Spirit shall become the directing force in my life.

I believe in the holy catholic Church, in the possibility of a church that is thoroughly Christian and all inclusive—and will do what I can to secure it.

I believe in the communion of saints, in the possibility of a Christian fellowship which shall raze all barriers of race and nation and color and class, a fellowship which shall bind the centuries and belt the world and unite the peoples of earth by a bond so strong that not even the dogs of war can break it—and I will endeavor through all my life to realize it.

I believe in the forgiveness of sins—and will grant unto others the forgiveness which I myself require.

I believe in the life everlasting, the eternal life of God in man, full of grace and truth—

and I will endeavor to live that life here and now.

It would be possible, I think, to repeat the Apostles' Creed in a way that would indicate a desire and even a determination, on the part of the person so repeating it, to live a splendidly Christian life. But in no such fashion as this were men encouraged to repeat it in the second century, in the eighth century, or in any succeeding century.

The church has called upon men to believe in certain dogmas *concerning* Jesus. It has not stood before men with a mighty summons to believe *in* Jesus, in the teaching which bears his name, in the cause which captured his allegiance, in the God into whose hands, living and dying, he committed his case. And is this not the supreme heresy of history—this heresy of a misplaced emphasis? If only men had caught the spirit of Jesus, and made their own the purpose of Jesus, their theories as to the person of Jesus would have moved steadily nearer to the truth, and the kingdom of God would have come in marvelous measure. But, since the Council of Nicea, the church has insisted that it was of supreme importance to hold correct opinions as to the person of Jesus, and (certainly by implication) of relatively less importance to catch the spirit and

share the purpose of Jesus; and to-day we are still a long, long way from that diviner civilization of which he dreamed.

The plain fact of the matter seems to be that many people who believe what the church says *about* Jesus do not believe *in* Jesus very much. Or perhaps it would be a bit more just to say that they are not sure whether they believe in him. George Bernard Shaw is sponsor for the statement that "what a man really believes may be ascertained, not from the creed which he so easily professes, but from the assumptions on which he builds his life." What are the assumptions on which most people build their lives? Are they like those on which Jesus built his life? That a man ought to go into life, not to be ministered unto but to minister; that he ought to seek first, not commercial success, nor political success, nor ecclesiastical success, but the kingdom of God; that he ought to return good for evil, and let his every act be motived by love—these are some of the assumptions, the presuppositions, of Jesus. They are the assumptions, the presuppositions of how many of the people who say with their lips, "I believe in God, the Father Almighty, and in Jesus Christ his only begotten son, our Lord"? And how many of those who recite,

in concert, the Apostles' Creed really believe that the principles of Jesus may, or should be, applied to industrial and international relationships?

During the battle of Saint Mihiel the author drove into a little French village with a camionette load of supplies. House after house had been pierced by the shells, but what interested him most was the church. The walls were still standing and supported the roof. But the interior of the building was gutted as by fire. The pews were destroyed. The images around the walls were destroyed. The altar was disfigured in a score of places. Just one piece of furnishing was left intact—a life-sized statue of the Christ placed above the door. Outside the door, but a few feet away, was a large tree with a three-inch shell buried in its heart. The shell was a dud. Had it exploded, the whole front of the church, including the one remaining statue, would, in all probability, have been destroyed. Is it fancy, merely, or something more than fancy that sees in that gutted church, with its single piece of furniture remaining intact, a striking parable of what the Great War has done to a so-called Christian world? Christianity has been stripped of its superficial furnishings, its accretions, its nonessentials. A

world that called itself Christian is left standing face to face with the Man of Nazareth, with neither image nor altar to obstruct the view. And for the first time in their lives thousands of people are seriously asking, *Do* we believe on the Lord Jesus Christ?

III

In a lecture delivered in Queen's College, London, just before the outbreak of the war, Professor Cramb declared that in the twentieth century two great spirit forces contend for men's allegiance—Napoleon and Christ. In the spirit of Hamlet's advice to his guilty mother, let us look first on this picture, and then on that.

In his memoir of Napoleon Bonaparte, Chancellor Pasquier says that his great contemporary never experienced any hatred or any affection not dictated to him by self-interest. Napoleon himself once declared that he was the fragment of a rock launched into space. A moment's reflection will show, I think, that each of these statements interprets and confirms the other. Behold a man so devoid of ordinary human feeling, so contemptuous of his own kind, that he refuses even to hate when it is not to his interest to do so; a man who thinks of himself as being above

morality—the regulations of the crowd; a veritable meteor of a man, destined by the gods to blaze his way across the world and leave behind him a path of glory.

Napoleon cared for men only as they were useful to him, and only as long as they were useful to him. He cared for women only as they might serve the ends of state or minister to his lust. He did not hesitate to violate a treaty, nor to deal treacherously with a friend. In order to cover up his mistakes he deliberately falsified his dispatches. Even Waterloo must not be counted a blot upon his military career. So, with almost his dying breath, he endeavored to fix the blame for this tragic defeat upon two of his generals, one of whom, at that very moment, was laboring in America to secure the release of his former chief; the other, a brave and chivalrous officer who had sacrificed his life for the man who defamed him. In pursuit of his mad ambition to dominate Europe, Napoleon did not scruple to use up the manhood of France. "A man like me," he once said to Metternich, "cares very little for the loss of a million men." He invaded Russia with an army of six hundred and ten thousand. When he returned from Russia five hundred thousand of these had disappeared. The armies with which he

fought his last battles were made up of school boys less than twenty years of age. And when his long career of bloodshed had come to an end, it was found that the stature of the average Frenchman had been reduced an inch.

In one of Saint Paul's references to the Man of Nazareth he says that Jesus went about doing good. Jesus himself once declared that he had come into the world not to be ministered unto but to minister, and to give his life as a ransom for many. These two statements also interpret and confirm each other. Behold a man who touched his fellow men only to help and heal and bless them. He cared for men even when they were not useful to him, even when they were saying all manner of evil against him, falsely, and seeking to destroy him. And he cared for women in a fashion so chivalrous that wherever his life and teaching have had influence woman has attained a new value, both in her own eyes and in the eyes of men. His life ended in a tragedy, but a tragedy which has touched the life of all mankind to finer issues. Knowing that his teaching was unpopular in influential circles, he nevertheless risked and finally lost his life in the hope that those coming after him might have life, and have it more abundantly.

Is it true that in the twentieth century two great forces contend for men's allegiance—Napoleon and Christ? Well, we know now what Napoleonism means. We know what it means in any individual life. Once and again we have met some man who had in him not the genius, perhaps, but certainly the spirit of Napoleon. And we have seen this man riding roughshod over other men. We have seen him using other men simply as the instruments of his own success. We know also what Napoleonism means in industry. We know that industrial Napoleons, big and little, capitalist and walking delegate, are largely responsible for the industrial unrest from which the whole world is suffering. And who does not know what Napoleonism means in international relationships? Under the tutelage of Napoleonism, the end of all and be-all of the state is power. The state may do anything it deems necessary to do in order to strengthen its power. It may even bring on war whenever war offers a fair chance of getting what the state wants or thinks it requires. And in the waging of war the state need not be handicapped by any consideration of justice, or mercy, or honor, or good faith. Napoleonism makes possible the invasion of Belgium, the burning of Louvain, the sinking

of the Lusitania, the dropping of bombs upon the heads of women and children, the unrestricted use of the submarine. It makes possible the continuation of a blockade against a defeated enemy during eighteen months after the signing of an armistice on the basis of the Fourteen Points.

Napoleonism in the social world has given us the egoistic individual using other men merely as the instruments of his own profit or pleasure. Napoleonism in the industrial world has given us the egoistic capitalist and labor leader recklessly seeking personal ends. Napoleonism in the international world had given us the egoistic state threatening the peace and freedom of mankind.

We know what Napoleonism means. Do we know what Christianity means? We have never seen Christianity acting on so large a scale. And yet, I think, we do know what it means, or would mean. There are certain ideas and ideals which Christianity undeniably represents. It insists that One is our Father, and that all men are brothers. It has regard for the personality of every man, however weak, or poor, or oppressed, or degraded. "What shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul?" When Jesus put that question he placed the

value of a human soul as high as it can be placed. He declared that it has infinite value in the sight of God. In one of his Yale lectures Silvester Horne maintained that the Christian gospel is contained in a single verse of one of the great Christian hymns:

> "Were the whole realm of nature mine,
> That were a present far too small;
> Love so amazing, so divine,
> Demands my soul!—"

"That means," says Silvester Horne, "that the soul of every forced laborer on the Amazon is of more value than all the mines of Johannesburg, all the diamonds of the Kimberly, all the millions of all the magnates of America. It affirms that, in God's sight, all the suns and stars that people infinite space are of inferior worth to one human spirit, dwelling it may be in the degraded body of some victim of drink or lust, some member of the gutter population of a great city who has descended to his doom by means of the manifold temptations with which society environs him."

If that is the teaching of Christianity, who can fail to glimpse what its application would mean? Christianity would not sanction the exploitation of the many for the sake of a few. It would not tolerate the treatment

of great classes of human beings merely as foundation stones for the erection of a culture in which only a few are to share. It would sanction neither a selfish nationalism nor a blind, bitter, unreasoning racialism. A thoroughgoing application of the teaching of Jesus would mean the end of oppression, the end of jingoism, the end of race hatred, and, finally, the end of war.

Once more in humanity's judgment hall two figures are standing—one, a man who waded through blood to a throne; the other, a man who, refusing a throne, went to a cross. And once more in humanity's judgment hall the question is being put, "Which of these twain shall I release unto you?" Knowing as we now know what Napoleonism means, seeing as we are beginning to see what Christianity would mean if given a chance, God help us if we permit the Son of man to be crucified again!

IV

Two of the principles for which Christianity incontestably stands demand special consideration.

1. The principle of love versus hate. Said Jesus, "Ye have heard that it was said, Thou shalt love thy neighbor, and hate thine enemy:

but I say unto you, Love your enemies . . . that ye may be sons of your Father which is in heaven: for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sendeth rain on the just and the unjust.'"[1]

It is a curious fact that during the Great War hate increased with distance from the trenches. The people who hated most intensely were not the combatants, but the non-combatants. One afternoon, "somewhere in France," I had a most interesting and illuminating conversation with two French officers. One of them damned the Boche in every sentence. In his opinion, the Germans were a race of savages who never had made, and never could make, any contribution to the higher life of the world. The German language itself was an utterly barbarous tongue that could not and should not survive. The second officer expressed the opinion that by her contribution to the world's music alone Germany had demonstrated her right to live; and he went on to speak in a hopeful way not only of the future of France, but of the future of Germany, the new, regenerated Germany, that would slowly but surely emerge from the wreck and ruin of war. I learned later that this second officer had been for thirty months,

[1] Matt. 5. 43–45.

without a break, in the trenches, under shell fire. And when I ventured to ask him whether there were many Frenchmen who were able to think as objectively and dispassionately as he did, he replied, "Yes, many; everyone, in fact, who has suffered." Said he, "When you have lived for months in a cold, damp, muddy trench, enduring all the torture of loneliness and suspense, and have realized that opposite you, in a similar trench, were other men, your enemies, enduring the same hardship, the same loneliness, the same suspense—men who in all probability were no more responsible for the war than you yourself were—well, you could keep on fighting, but you could not keep on hating." And then, as if in answer to my own unspoken thought, he said, "Our friend who thinks that not even the German language is fit to survive has never lived in the trenches; he has always been a staff officer, whose duties kept him comfortably in the rear."

It is civilians who do most of the hating during a war. And it is civilians who do most of the peace-making after a war! Perhaps this is one reason why the "peace" made at Versailles has been cynically, though truly, described as a peace which does, indeed, pass all understanding. It is a "peace" which

contains the seeds of future wars. For it has a large mixture of hate in it; and hate breeds hate, revenge begets a desire for counter-revenge. To those who refuse to show mercy will no mercy be shown.

In his modern version of "Antony and Cleopatra," George Bernard Shaw makes Antony say to the guilty queen: "You have slain their leader; it is right that they shall slay you. And then in the name of that right (he emphasizes the word with great scorn) shall I not slay them for murdering their queen, and be slain in my turn by their countrymen as an invader of their fatherland? Can Rome do less, then, than slay these slayers too, to show the world how Rome avenges her sons and her honor? And so, to the end of history, murder shall breed murder, always in the name of right and honor and peace, until the gods are tired of blood and create a race that understands."[1] The notes describing the action of the play inform us that just here there is fierce uproar, in the courtyard, and that Cleopatra becomes white with terror.

If only they could hear the uproar in the courtyard of the future, would not the people

[1] George Bernard Shaw, "Cæsar and Cleopatra," used by permission of Brentano, publishers, New York.

who are now clamoring for policies of hate turn white with terror? The Prussians who in 1871 imposed a huge indemnity upon stricken France, and robbed her of those two fair daughters, Alsace and Lorraine, thought that by weakening France they were securing to themselves, and to their children, prosperity and peace. To-day, the bones of their sons are moldering in the fields of Flanders, and on the streets of Berlin their daughters are begging bread.

A decent and enduring civilization cannot be built upon a foundation of hate. If we really desire for ourselves, and for our children, a better world, we must build upon a foundation of love.

2. The principle of service versus selfishness. Said Jesus, "If any man would be first, he shall be last of all, and minister of all."[1]

There was a time when it was seriously contended that selfishness in the individual is beneficial to the community; that the more a man gets for himself, the more, indirectly, if not directly, he enriches his community. And this certain solemn professors still contended even when their attention was called to the fact that, in order to get more for themselves, some of the cotton mill owners of England

[1] Mark 9. 35.

were employing little children to work for them, thirteen hours every day!

Now, we are beginning to see the tragic falsity of this gospel of enlightened selfishness. Selfishness in the individual, far from being beneficial to the community, is very apt to prove disastrous to the community. Selfishness on the part of capital means that labor won't work; selfishness on the part of labor means that capital can't work. We are discovering that we cannot turn the wheels of production with only selfishness as a motive power. If a decent and enduring civilization cannot be built upon a foundation of hate, neither can it be built upon a foundation of selfishness. A civilization that was built upon selfishness is disintegrating before our eyes, and Europe is confronted with a situation so appalling that the imagination cannot grasp it.

What now, then? Why, now, we must try to discover some other, more powerful motive with which to drive the wheels of production, and feed and clothe the world. Why not try the motive of Him who came into the world not to be ministered unto but to minister, and to give his life as a ransom for many!

CHAPTER VI

CHRISTIANITY AND LIFE

There is something almost pathetic in the eagerness with which people of all kinds press their lips to the cup of life. Not a Livingstone only, exploring the undiscovered secrets of the Dark Continent; nor a Grenfell, making his rounds on the bleak Labrador coast; nor a Roosevelt, preaching and practicing the gospel of strenuosity—not such men only; but the young fellow, also, who is recklessly generous with his father's money; and his elder brother, who is remaining unmarried and carefully investing each cent; and his sister, who is learning to smoke; and his mother, who is dabbling in politics; and his father, who is increasing his pile; and the "poor devil," who is trying to break into the class he affects to despise; and the thief and the gambler and the poor, wretched creature who is purchasing the cheap and awful substitute for a good man's love—these all are pressing their lips to the cup of life. Some are drinking wisely; others, foolishly. But, save an occasional cynic here and there, all

are drinking eagerly; and the man who cannot view sympathetically this universal quest of life must himself be something less than human.

We have been dealing, in these chapters, with some of the intellectual aspects of Christianity; but what the man on the street wants to know about Christianity is, Does it make for life? If he should become a Christian, would life mean less or more, become richer or poorer? And that question is perfectly legitimate. In one of his lectures to students, Professor Henry Drummond used to put Browning's question concerning Christianity: Has it your vote to be true? But Christianity cannot be made true by a majority vote. The truth of Christianity can be ascertained in only one way—the test of life. Does Christianity make for life?

I

Harold Monro has written a poem in which a certain unfavorable impression of Christianity is somewhat skillfully reflected. He calls this poem "The Children of Love"; and he says:

Suddenly came
Running along to him naked, with curly hair,
That rogue of the lovely world,
That other beautiful child whom the virgin Venus bare.

The holy boy
Gazed with those sad blue eyes that all men know.
Impudent Cupid stood
Panting, holding an arrow and pointing his bow.

Will you not play?
(Jesus, run to him, run to him, swift for joy.
Is he not holy, like you?
Are you afraid of his arrows, O beautiful dreaming boy?)

. . . . . .

Marvelous dream!
Cupid has offered his arrows for Jesus to try;
He has offered his bow for the game.
But Jesus went weeping away, and left him there wondering why.

Notice: a beautiful, dreaming boy, with sad blue eyes, afraid of bows and arrows and roguish though kindly companions, goes weeping away! This, apparently, represents Mr. Monro's impression of Christianity. Nor is he alone in holding this view. That Jesus was a dreamer of dreams; that he possessed, undeniably, a certain beauty and charm of character, but lacked the virility which participation in the affairs of a real world requires; that he is responsible for an ideal of life that is gloomy, austere, and other-worldly; that his influence has made, on the whole, rather for sadness than for gladness—such is the impression of Jesus and of Christianity in many minds. But is this impression well founded?

Many people have made the mistake of identifying Christianity with some movement which does not fully or truly represent it. They have identified it, for instance, with monasticism.

The author visited, one summer, the Trappist Monastery, at Gethsemane, Kentucky. There, on American soil, in the twentieth century, is a strange anachronism. When one enters the door of this monastery he goes back five hundred years. A company of ninety monks live absolutely apart from the world under the vows of poverty, chastity, obedience, and silence. They are divided into two classes, lay and clerical. Both classes spend a certain portion of the day in hard labor: the clerical brothers five hours, the lay brothers eight hours. By the former, five additional hours each day are spent in reading and meditation. Much time also is spent in prayer. The monks sleep in the long, loose robes which they wear in the daytime, removing only their shoes. They sleep on mattresses made purposely hard and uncomfortable. They eat no meat. They eat no eggs, except on Easter day. They drink milk only from Easter till the first of September. They remain absolutely silent save when they are making a report to some superior officer

or conducting an occasional visitor through the spacious halls of their monastery. Why are they there? To escape the slings and arrows of outrageous fortune. To avoid temptation. To do penance. To obtain forgiveness. To save their souls. But such shrinking from life, such running away from life, is not Christianity. Christianity does not seek to save men out of the world or apart from the world. Christianity places a man in some "house by the side of a road where the race of men go by," and tells him that he can find salvation only in right relationships toward God and his fellows.

By others, Christianity has been identified with Puritanism. But Puritanism is not a normal expression of Christianity; it represents a reaction. J. R. Green says: "The want of poetry, of fancy, in the common Puritan temper condemned half the popular observances of England as superstitions. It was superstitious to keep Christmas, or to deck the house with holly and ivy. It was superstitious to dance round the village May-pole. It was flat Popery to eat a mince-pie. The rough sport, the mirth and fun of 'merry England,' were out of place in an England called with so great a calling. Bull-baiting, bear-baiting, horse-racing, cock-fighting, the village revel,

the dance under the May-pole, were put down with the same indiscriminating severity." The candid historian is obliged to admit that once and again, both in England and in New England, Puritanism played the regrettable role of kill-joy. At least some of the images that were so ruthlessly broken might have been spared. At least some of the amusements that were so sternly forbidden might have been allowed. Puritanism is not a normal manifestation of Christianity, for it represents a reaction, and, as reactions usually do, it went too far.

Yet who can deny that in defense of Puritanism much can be said? After all, animalism is not art; beastliness is not pleasure; license is not liberty; indecency is not beauty; lust, however carefully disguised, is not love. And the Puritan said so! The Puritan strove to maintain those mighty spiritual values without which there can be no deep or abiding happiness. He endeavored to keep the soul of man alive.

Christianity protests, at times, but always in the name of life. There are writers to-day, more or less gifted, who are making a plea, sometimes veiled and sometimes open, for "free love"; for love, that is to say, in which there is no recognition of any obligation save

the obligation to secure one's own happiness. And in how many of the musical comedies, drawing large houses night after night, is the sanctity of the marriage relation made light of! Well, Christianity protests. For Christianity believes that Jesus was speaking in the interest of the highest ultimate human happiness when he pleaded for the union of one man to one woman, for better, for worse, for richer, for poorer, in sickness, and in health, till death do them part.

Compare the matrimonial adventures of some of the so-called leaders of a decadent society with the wedded life of Elizabeth Barrett and Robert Browning. Compare the hot, feverish, unwholesome effusions of certain present-day pens with this from the pen of Mrs. Browning:

"How do I love thee? Let me count the ways:
I love thee to the depth and breadth and height
My soul can reach, when feeling out of sight
For the ends of Being and ideal Grace;
I love thee to the level of every day's
Most quiet need, by sun and candlelight;
I love thee freely as men strive for Right;
I love thee purely as they turn from Praise;
I love thee with the passion put to use
In my old griefs, and with my childhood's faith;
I love thee with a love I seemed to lose
With my lost saints—I love thee with the breath
Smiles, tears, of all my life!—and, if God choose,
I shall but love thee better after death."

Christianity protests against animalism in the name of art. It protests against indecency in the name of beauty. It protests against license in the name of liberty. It protests against beastliness in the name of pleasure. It protests against lust in the name of love. *It protests against selfishness in the name of life.*

How utterly false and ungenerous those bitter lines of Swinburne!—

> "Thou hast conquered, O pale Galilæan.
> The world has grown gray with thy breath."

When did the world grow gray with his breath? Was it in the fourth century, when, amid the ruins of a brilliant but corrupt civilization, Augustine wrote his City of God, and helped to keep humanity's flickering faith alive? Was it in the thirteenth century, when great Gothic cathedrals lifted the thoughts of men heavenward, and some of the most amazing poetry ever written was born in Dante's soul? When did the world grow gray with the breath of Jesus? Was it in the eighteenth century when, in England, a graduate of Oxford University lifted a people out of the mud by the lever of a profoundly Christian purpose, and in America, the Sermon on the Mount gave birth to a government of, and

by, and for the people? Or is it now that the world is growing gray with his breath, in a day which is witnessing the birth pangs of a new era? The world has grown black at times. It grew black with the breath of Nero, and with the breath of Napoleon, and, in our own time, with the breath of the ruling classes of Europe. But the breath of Jesus, in so far as it has touched the world, has cleansed the world, and brightened the world, and given to the lives of men whatever of beauty and dignity they now possess.

II

Christianity holds a cross before the eyes of men. But that cross is not the symbol of a drab and dreary asceticism; it is the symbol only of the price which must be paid for any rich and rewarding life. When Jesus says, "Whosoever would save his life shall lose it: and whosoever shall lose his life for my sake shall find it,"[1] he is enunciating the law of "abundant" life.

This law applies to man's physical life. You have noticed, no doubt, that people who are very solicitous about their health usually "enjoy" poor health. Kate Douglas Wiggin makes one of her characters remark, con-

[1] Matt. 16. 25.

cerning a certain young man who has recently passed away, "I guess he was completely worn out taking care of his health." There are people who never run any physical risk, not even in pursuit of their duty. They never venture out of doors when the weather is inclement. They are less afraid to sin than to sit in a draught. They spend much of their time reading physical culture magazines, and making heroic efforts to follow instructions. They carefully regulate their eating and their drinking, their lying down and their getting up, their going out and their coming in—with the result that they are always ailing and complaining. Seeking too diligently, too consciously, to save their health, they are losing it. Which does not mean that one should become reckless, and foolishly disregard the laws of health. It does mean, I suppose, that one ought to seek first, not to save his body, but to do his duty, even at some risk to his health. It may be that the enthusiasm engendered by a courageous, zestful performance of duty will invigorate his muscles, stimulate his heart action, facilitate digestion, bring a ruddy glow to his cheeks, and make him not only a happier man but a better man, even physically. In the army, during the War, many a man actually gained in weight.

(This is, of course, no argument for war.) Just before the War, in Dayton, Ohio, when that city was swept by a flood of water four miles in width and, in many places, twenty feet deep, I heard people declare that never before had they enjoyed such excellent health —people who had stood for hours in cold water, knee-deep, assisting boats to land; people who, in several cases, had risked their lives, in swift currents, in repeated attempts to save their neighbors. Daring to risk their health for love's sake, they found it.

Jesus's law applies, likewise, to the intellectual life. At the heart of all true education is a cross. A great literary critic has defined style as "the determined exclusion of what is almost but not quite right." In this determined exclusion of what is almost but not quite right, again and again, one meets the cross. Think of Robert Louis Stevenson writing his stories amid paroxysms of coughing and twinges of pain—and then rewriting them three, five, seven, in some cases as many as nine times. People sometimes sigh and say, "If only I had time to read." It would greatly illuminate the situation if they should say instead, "If only I had the courage to read." I once loaned my copy of Les Misérables to an elect lady who, I thought, would

greatly enjoy it. Within a very few days she returned the book with the explanation that for some reason she could not become interested in it, and added, "You cannot pick it up and lay it down as you can a cook-book." I ought, perhaps, to say that this worthy woman had never had the advantages of academic training. But who has not known college-bred individuals who preferred Ella Wheeler Wilcox to Elizabeth Barrett Browning and Harold Bell Wright to William Makepeace Thackeray? And when, in the course of an evening's conversation, such persons reveal the fact that there are, indeed, many things in heaven and earth which are not included in their philosophy, one knows that their ignorance is due, not to the fact that they have lacked time to read, but only to the fact that they have lacked courage to read, books that are worth while. Whosoever will save his mind all sweat and strain will lose whatever of intellectual life he might have had. It is only the man who remorselessly girds his mind for an intellectual race who has any chance of winning the prize of a rich and rewarding intellectual culture.

And does not Jesus's law apply with equal certainty to man's social life? He who determines to "look out for number one" discov-

ers, after a while, that "number one" has ceased to be interesting, even to himself. As Browning's Paracelsus learned (alas, too late!) love, hope, fear, faith—these make humanity. But these come only to the man who builds his life into other people's lives and other people's lives into his own life. Who are the happy people, to whom life appears worth living? Here are some of them: the mother who risks her life that her babe may have life; the father (on a small salary) who denies himself in a score of ways, unknown to anyone, in order that his wife and children may enjoy a more abundant life; the physician who sits up all night to save the life of a patient; the school-teacher who patiently goes over the same lesson a dozen times in order that some boy or girl, not very alert, may advance a little farther into the light; the missionary who endures loneliness and uncongenial surroundings that some backward race may advance farther into the light. These know what love is, what hope is, what fear is, what faith is. And these know what happiness is!

III

It is feared by many that Christianity is impracticable. And there are certain inter-

pretations of Jesus's teaching which lend considerable color to this view.

Said Jesus, "Ye have heard that it was said, An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth: but I say unto you, Resist not him that is evil: but whosoever smiteth thee on the right cheek, turn to him the other also. And if any man would go to law with thee, and take away thy coat, let him have thy cloak also.'" Tolstoy concluded that under no circumstances is a Christian justified in using physical force. And the length to which he went in the maintenance of this thesis is revealed in a friendly criticism of the position of the Rev. Adin Ballou, himself a believer in nonresistance. Tolstoy pronounced Ballou "one of the chief benefactors of humanity," but declared that he did not go far enough. He said:

The comments that I wish to make on Mr. Ballou's explanation of the doctrine [of nonresistance] are: First, that I cannot agree with the concession he makes for employing violence against drunkards and insane people. The Master made no concessions, and we can make none. We must try, as Ballou puts it, to make impossible the existence of such people, but if they do exist, we must use all possible means, and sacrifice ourselves, but not employ violence. A true Christian will always prefer to be killed by a madman, than to deprive him of his liberty. Secondly [I regret], that Mr. Ballou does not

---

[3] Matt. 5. 38, 39.

decide more categorically the question of *property;* for a true Christian not only cannot claim any rights of property, but the term *property* cannot have any significance for him. All that he uses, a Christian only uses till somebody takes it from him. He cannot defend his property, so he cannot have any. Thirdly, I think that for a true Christian the term "government" cannot have any signification or reality. Government is, for a Christian, only regulated violence; governments, states, nations, property, churches—all these for a true Christian are only words without meaning; he can understand the meaning other people attach to these words, but for him they have none. . . . No compromise! The Christian principle must be pursued to its full extent, to enable it to support practical life. The saying of Christ that, "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself and take up a cross daily and follow me," was true in his time, and is true in ours; a follower of Christ must be ready to be poor and to suffer; if not, he cannot be his disciple, and nonresistance implies it all.[3]

George Kennan once reported to Tolstoy the case of a delicately nurtured girl who was stripped of her clothing and brutally treated by some ruffian soldiers, and asked him if in such a case it did not become a man's duty to employ physical violence in defense of another. Tears came into Tolstoy's eyes, but he held his ground. "No," said he, "not even in such circumstances would it be right.'"[4]

Said Jesus, "Ye have heard that it was

[3] See Aylmer Maude, The Life of Tolstoi, vol. ii, p. 355. Dodd, Mead & Co., publishers, New York.

[4] See Nathan Haskell Dole, The Life of Tolstoi, p. 336n.

said, Thou shalt not commit adultery: but I say unto you that every one that looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart.'"[5] And at first, Tolstoy contented himself with the exhortation: Do not lust. But when The Kreutzer Sonata, in which he had dealt boldly with the sex question, was cruelly misunderstood, he wrote an "Afterword," in which he said:

> The Christian ideal is that of love of God and one's fellowman, . . . whereas sexual love, marriage, is a service of self, and consequently in any case an obstacle to the service of God and man, and therefore, from a Christian point of view, a fall, a sin.
>
> To get married would not help the service of God and man, though it were done to perpetuate the human race. For that purpose, instead of getting married and producing fresh children, it would be much simpler to save and rear those millions of children who are now perishing around us for lack of food for their bodies, not to mention food for their souls.
>
> Only if he were sure that all existing children were provided for, could a Christian enter upon marriage without being conscious of a moral fall.[6]

Said Jesus, "If any man cometh unto me, and hateth not his own father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be

[5] Matt. 5. 27, 28.

[6] See The Kreutzer Sonata, and "Afterword." Also Maude's Life, vol. ii, chap. xi. Dodd, Mead & Co., publishers, New York.

my disciple.'"[7] There were times when Tolstoy wondered whether he ought not to leave his home, never to return. He was devoted to his wife and children, and they were devoted to him. Indeed, the Countess's pride in her husband's genius, her untiring labors in copying his manuscripts, her daring venture as the publisher of his books, constitute one of the most touching episodes in literary history. But she did not, could not, share all his views.

Believing that private ownership is wrong and unchristian, Tolstoy desired to dispose of all his property, and to this she would not consent. Then he desired to transfer his fortune to her, insisting that he could not bear the burden. Her reply was, "So you want to place it upon the shoulders of me, your wife."

Another point at issue was the education of their children. The Countess desired for them just such an education as children in their station of life were accustomed to receive. To this Tolstoy was bitterly opposed, believing, as he did, that the education aimed at by contemporary society was "only sought for the sake of getting above one's fellows, distinguishing oneself from them, and sub-

[7] Luke 14. 26.

jecting them to oneself." He desired his children to become acquainted with nature and with men, and to develop love and compassion for their neighbors, but as for the education of the schools, he would have had none of it, if he could have prevented it.

Tolstoy, moreover, insisted upon living the life of a peasant. He adopted the peasant garb—sheepskin trousers, coarse, woolen jacket, high greased boots, sheepskin cap. He cared for his own room, permitting people to wait upon him as little as possible. And, neglecting his literary work, he took to splitting wood, tilling the soil, and cobbling shoes, in the belief that every man should eat his bread in the sweat of his own brow, and not in the sweat of another man's brow.[8]

The Countess began to feel desperate. On one occasion, she said to her brother, with tears in her eyes, "It is hard for me now. . . . The property and the education of the children are all on my hands. And I am blamed for attending to them and not going about as a beggar! Do you think I would not have followed him, had I not had little children? But he has forgotten everything for the sake of his teaching."

[8] Tolstoy did not seem to realize that productive toil may be of the head, and not only of the hand.

In view of such differences of opinion as these, a certain measure of domestic friction was quite unavoidable. Tolstoy frequently quoted the saying, "A man's foes shall be they of his own household."[9] His family insisted upon living in what he regarded as wasteful, selfish luxury. He was continually tormented by the glaring contrast between his gospel of renunciation and his mode of life. "You preach, but what about practice?" asked his critics. His reply was: "I do not preach and cannot preach, though I passionately desire to do so. I could only preach by deeds: and my deeds are bad." He was cobbling his own boots and making his own bed; but he had a roof over his head, and a few simple garments which he could call his own; he even rode horseback at times—so his deeds were bad! His conscience tortured him; and, reflecting upon those words of Jesus about hating one's own family, he seriously considered whether he ought not to run away from such conditions of luxury as prevailed in his own home.

At last he did so. Accompanied only by his faithful physician, he fled from the home of his ancestors, never to return. The journey began in comparative comfort. But after

[9] Matt. 10. 36.

the first few miles, Tolstoy concluded that he ought not to be riding first class, and insisted upon entering a dirty, foul-smelling, third-class coach, in which he suffered cruelly from bad air and exposure.

A few days later, very sick, he was carried into the humble home of a station master, and there he died.

I have ventured to use Tolstoy as an illustration of the statement, made above, that certain interpretations of the teaching of Jesus would seem to support the impression that Christianity is impracticable. Having done so, I feel bound to add that, in my judgment, Tolstoy was one of those great, sincere, heroic spirits who have helped to open the eyes of mankind to life's eternal realities. One may not believe that he always saw clearly; but who will deny that he earnestly tried to see? One may not believe that he always interpreted rightly the mind of Jesus; but who will deny that, at least in the later years, he possessed in extraordinary measure the spirit of the Master? Tolstoy must be viewed in the light of his background—the old Russia, its horrible serfdom, its political and ecclesiastical autocracy, its blind censorship, its hideous punishments and persecutions, its brutal and repeated miscarriages of justice. It is need-

ful to remember what he was moving from, as well as what he was moving toward. When one does consider him in relation to his whole environment, one can only marvel at his greatness, at what he said and what he did.

But there are, I believe, two grave dangers which always confront us when we examine the teachings of Jesus.

One is the danger of taking him too literally. As Saint Paul reminds us, "The letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life."[10] Give a thief rope enough, and he will hang himself. Give the literalistic method of interpreting the sayings of Jesus a thoroughgoing application, and it will write as its own epitaph: *Reductio ad absurdam.* For, as some one has suggested, when, in answer to Peter's question, "Lord, how oft shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? until seven times?" Jesus replies, "I say not unto thee, Until seven times; but until seventy times seven," the literalist must be prepared to affirm that he meant exactly four hundred and ninety times, and that on the four hundred and ninety-first offense forgiveness ceases to be a virtue. And when Jesus says, concerning the Pharisees, that they "strain out the gnat and swallow the camel," once again the

[10] 2 Cor. 3. 6.

literalist must screw his courage to the sticking point and be prepared to affirm that, in those days, the pharisaical throat was of such dimensions that a whole camel could be swallowed in one gulp! If only the literalist will be consistent we need not quarrel with him; we need only wonder at him—and confidently expect that before long he will be casting about for a more excellent method of interpretation.

But another danger which faces us when we come to the teaching of Jesus is just the opposite one that we shall not take it literally enough. In how many cases have sayings of Jesus been "spiritualized" to the point of emasculation. In how many cases have they been toned down until all that was left of them was the utterly commonplace advice of a commonplace morality.

Thus one interpreter, when he comes to the saying, "Lay not up for yourselves treasures on the earth, where moth and rust doth consume, and where thieves break through and steal: but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth consume, and where thieves do not break through nor steal,"[11] offers this exposition:

Jesus did not say, "Lay not up for yourselves treas-

[11] Matt. 6. 19, 20.

ures upon earth." He said, "Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth *where moth and rust doth consume and where thieves break through and steal.*" And no sensible American does. Moth and rust do not get at Mr. Rockefeller's oil wells, nor at the Sugar Trust's sugar, and thieves do not often break through and steal a railway or an insurance company or a savings bank. What Jesus condemned was hoarding of wealth.[12]

Is it also true that Jesus does not tell us to lay up treasures [everywhere] in heaven, but only to lay up treasures in [those portions of] heaven *where neither moth nor rust doth consume, and where thieves do not break through nor steal?* The interpretation given above moves another reader of the New Testament to remark that, by the same token, the Master's saying concerning swearing has been robbed of its sting. "Jesus said, Neither shalt thou swear by thy head, because thou canst not make one hair white or black. But we can now make one hair white or black, or a combination of both. We can make it a brilliant peroxide golden; we could, if pushed to an extreme, make it purple or green. So we are now clearly entitled to swear all we please by our head!"[13]

If Jesus merely meant to say, "Do not put your valuables in an old stocking, or under

[12] See Outlook, vol. xciv, p. 576. The paragraph quoted hardly does justice to the spirit of the article which should be read in its entirety.

[13] Upton Sinclair, The Profits of Religion, p. 177.

your pillow, but take them to the bank, or, better still, invest them in some kind of non-taxable stock, guaranteed at seven per cent'' —if that is all Jesus meant to say, where shall we look for an example of the extraordinary ethical and spiritual insight which he is claimed to possess? Certainly, not here!

We are confronted, then, by a two-fold danger in relation to Jesus: the danger that we shall take him too literally, and the danger that we shall not take him literally enough. By the methods of a bald literalism, he may be made to appear foolish and impracticable. By the methods of an ingenious spiritualization, he may be made to appear so ''safe and sane'' that he ceases to be in any great sense a leader of mankind.

IV

What especially concerns us about Jesus is his point of view. Interpreters will continue to differ as to the exact meaning of specific statements; but can they conscientiously differ as to his general point of view? Jesus declared that God is Father and that men are brothers. He held that human life is infinitely sacred. He attached far more importance to human values than he did to property values. In his eyes the whole material world was but

an instrument, a means to an end; man, however, was not merely an instrument, but an end in himself. Such, indisputably, was Jesus's point of view. Is it an impracticable one? Would life mean less or more, become poorer or richer if this point of view were to prevail?

Christianity insists that no woman is merely an instrument. She is a daughter of God, and in God's sight has priceless value. If only the world believed that! How long would any city tolerate a vice district? How long would any man consent to treat as a mere *thing* one who, in the eyes of God, is infinitely sacred?

Christianity insists that no man is merely an instrument. If only the world believed that! To many an employee an employer is not a person; he is merely an institution, a fleshless, boneless, bloodless something that pays wages and receives dividends. And to many an employer an employee is not a person (a father, perchance, who objects to a twelve-hour day because he wants to spend some time with his children) but only a part of a plant, a bit of human machinery, a means of production. As industries have grown from more to more, men have shrunk from less to less. Furnishers of capital have suf-

fered a loss of personality in huge corporations. Furnishers of labor have suffered an even more terrible loss of personality in huge mills and mines and factories. What the world to-day imperatively needs is some form of industrial democracy in which personality may be recovered. If all who labor, whether with head or with hand, could participate in the management of the industry which immediately and vitally concerns them, would not personality find opportunity for development? Would not men view one another through the eyes of a new respect? Would they not feel toward one another a new sense of obligation? And would not peace eventually come to the industrial world?[14]

Christianity says that no child is merely an instrument. If only the world believed that! Child labor would be done away; and not only child labor, but irreverent educational systems. In how many schools of this present time are subjects taught, not with a view to helping a child develop into a man, but, rather, with a view to forcing a child to de-

[14] Within the limits of a lecture such as this, one can only hint at certain developments in industry the need for which could be adequately stated in nothing short of a volume. For the recovery of personality there is needed also such reorganization of industrial processes as will enable each worker to satisfy his creative instinct. Nothing could be more brutalizing than the extreme specialization which now prevails in some industries.

velop into a *party-man.* Education in this case is not a drawing out, but a putting in—a kind of forcible, intellectual feeding process in which the child is made to take whatever his elders think he ought to take, regardless of any possible violation of his own personality.

Absolute freedom of thought could not be granted to any child without too great risk. But absolute control of thought would involve an even greater risk, not only to the child, himself, but to his own and to all succeeding generations. For a generation would grow up thinking only what men before them had thought, and that would mean that the path of progress had come to an end in a blind alley. If we are to treat a child as a person, and not merely as a thing, we must educate him in the sense of drawing out the full contribution which he may make to the world's faith and hope and achievement, and not in the sense of merely putting into him such ideas as will cause him to perpetuate what we may choose to regard as a desirable civilization.

What Christianity says of any man it says of all men. For Christianity regards each man, not as a member of some particular race or nation, but as a member of the human fam-

ily to whom God is Father. It holds that a man is sacred in the eyes of God, not in virtue of the fact that he is a white man, or an Englishman, but just in virtue of the fact that he is a man. If only the world believed that! How long would war last? How long would lynchings continue to take place?

Because an Englishman says "been" instead of "bin"; because he says "either" instead of "eether," and "neither" instead of "neether"; because he possesses a certain reserve which easily passes for hauteur, and lacks, ofttimes, a sense of humor, many Americans can see no beauty in the Englishman that God, or anyone else, should desire him. And behold how vast a prejudice a little pigment causes! His skin is black; his lips are thick; his nose is flat. And so, many of us, whose skins are white, fail to appreciate his elemental good-nature, his capacity for laughter, his gift of music. Lord God of all races, all nations, open our eyes! "If the whole body were an eye, where were the hearing? If the whole were hearing, where were the smelling? But now hath God set the members each one of them in the body, even as it pleased him." And the American cannot say to the Englishman, 'I have no need of thee.'

[11] 1 Cor. 12. 17.

The white man cannot say to the black man, 'I have no need of thee.' " The tenacity that is Britain, the beauty that is France, the thoroughness that is Germany, the practical idealism that is America, the spirituality that is Korea, the courage that is Japan, the haunting sense of the infinite that is India—all are needed by a struggling humanity in its magnificent adventure.

V

Christianity makes its supreme contribution to human life by developing in men "the heaven-regarding eye." By "heaven," in this case, one means something vastly more than the heaven of any childish imagination, "above the deep, blue sky." One means all the reality and greatness and grandeur of the spiritual world.

Many a modern man is going about like Wordsworth's Cumberland Beggar, with his eyes upon the ground; and evermore,

> "Instead of common and habitual sight
> Of fields with rural works, of hill and dale,
> And the blue sky, one little patch of earth
> Is all his prospect."

If not one little patch of earth, one little office, it may be—some little place of mundane interest. He lacks "the heaven-regard-

ing eye," and his life is immeasurably poorer in consequence.

Tennyson and Carlyle were once looking at two busts, one of Goethe and one of Dante. "What is there in Dante's face which one misses in Goethe's?" asked Tennyson. Without a moment's hesitation, Carlyle replied, "God!" Here he comes—a successful business man, a distinguished professional man, or, it may be, a prominent ecclesiastic. But in how many cases does one instinctively feel that he is mostly of the earth, earthly! There is so little of God in his face! And the man who has little of God in his face has little of real joy in his life. Surely Carlyle is speaking words of truth and soberness when he declares that "man's unhappiness comes of his greatness; it is because there is an infinite in him which, with all his cunning, he cannot quite bury under the finite."[16]

Our greatest need, undeniably, is the need of God. And Christianity meets this need in a two-fold way. It gives men a conception of God that is intellectually satisfying and morally uplifting. And to those who keep spiritual company with Jesus Christ, it brings a lively sense of God's reality, a blessed experience of his presence.

[16] In Sartor Resartus, The Everlasting Yea.

Princeton Theological Seminary-Speer Library
1 1012 01009 3633